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THE

MOOR AND THE LOCH

SOME OPINIONS OF THE PRESS ON THE FOURTH EDITION OF

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"IN the present delightful volumes, however, he presents all lovers of Scotland with the completest details of every Highland sport, on all of which he is an unexceptionable authority; and with what many will value even more, a series of life-like sketches of the rarer and more interesting animals of the country. He has thus brought up to the present level of knowledge the history of all the scarce birds and beasts of Scotland. . . . Henceforth it must necessarily find a place in the knapsack of every Northern tourist who is fond of our wild creatures, and is simply indispensable in every Scotch shooting-lodge." - *Academy.*

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THE

MOOR AND THE LOCH

CONTAINING

MINUTE INSTRUCTIONS IN ALL HIGHLAND SPORTS

BY

JOHN COLQUHOUN

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

SIXTH EDITION, ENLARGED

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
MDCCCLXXXIV

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To the Memory of

A VERY DEARLY LOVED BROTHER,

WHOSE TRAGIC DEATH IN HIS OWN LOCH LOMOND,

ON THE 18TH OF DECEMBER 1873,

CALLED FORTH SUCH DEEP SYMPATHY AND SORROW,

THIS NEW EDITION OF

'THE MOOR AND THE LOCH'

IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY

JOHN COLQUHOUN.

"Ilk flow'r that blooms on foreign fell
Wad mind me o' the heather-bell;
Ilk little streamlet's jouk and turn
Wad mind me o' Glenourock burn.
Lands may be fair ayont the sea,
But Hieland hills and lochs for me!"

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIFTH EDITION.

THE present edition of 'The Moor and the Loch' has been carefully revised and brought down to date. A new chapter on the "Sound of Mull" has been added; and the Author has, in deference to the wishes expressed by many of his previous readers, prefaced this edition by an account of his "Early Recollections." Two portraits of the Author have now been introduced.

June 1880.

PREFACE TO THIRD EDITION.

WITHOUT much pretension to be called a Naturalist, I have always endeavoured to keep my eyes open when the wilder points of Nature were unfolded before me; and I can truly say, that no part of my mountain-life has given me such unmixed delight as

watching for myself the minute and tender care of the Great Parent of all good, in adapting the creatures of the storm to their solitudes, and spreading before them "a table in the wilderness."

Buffon, when asked the secret of his success, replied, "I have sat at my desk for fifty years!" Much, therefore, of his choicest information must have been derived from hunters, all of whom *ought* to be amateur naturalists. When we see the blunders bequeathed from scribe to scribe, even in many books of good authority, it gives great encouragement to those whose amusements afford them the means of noticing remote and peculiar creatures, to communicate to the scientific their own fresh and natural remarks. In regard to the habits of fish especially, no man is better qualified to give accurate information than a finished angler; for much of his superiority must consist in having a more thorough knowledge than his neighbour of all their wiles and ways.

Perhaps a more favourable *observatory* of this kind could scarcely be found than my present fascinating home on the banks of Loch Awe. The crow of the moorcock is heard from our windows—the bell of the roebuck, in the adjacent hanging wood, sounds close to our door; a good eye and glass may command the corries of Ben Cruachan; infinite varieties of wild-

fowl crowd our loch in winter, many of them rare polar visitors; the salmon-streams of the Awe and Orchy are within easy distance, and the mighty Ferox roams our shores for miles.

Having some sympathy with the classic chronicler of Selborne, who, lamenting the scarcity of quadrupeds in our island, remarks that "every new *species* is a great acquisition," I have determined to keep my hands clear of the extermination of any. The marten, the wild-cat, the kite, and the eagle, are not banished from the shaggy woods and rough braes of Sonachan and Barbea—they are scarcely grudged a share of the spoil; and though this whimsical forbearance may subject me to the charge of having sunk the sportsman in the "amateur naturalist," it is an accusation to which I can very cheerfully plead "Guilty."

April 1851.

PREFACE TO FOURTH EDITION.

THE 'Moor and the Loch' has been out of print for a number of years; and although often urged by my friends to bring out a Fourth Edition, I have refused to do so, until it was proved that many of the latest

sporting inventions would stand the test of practical experience. Having four sons, all excellent sportsmen, and first-class shots, I had a fine opportunity of defending what might be termed my old-fashioned ideas against their (to me) newfangled notions, and thus not unfrequently the truth was brought out by friction.

In the light of the experience thus gained, the chapters of the present edition have been carefully revised, and I have taken the opportunity of incorporating in it whatever passages in my other books —'Salmon-Casts and Stray Shots,' and 'Sporting Days'—appeared to be of interest, or calculated to assist the sportsman. The large additions which have been made to the various subjects will now, I trust, make 'The Moor and the Loch' more complete, and more worthy of the favour which, as a Handbook of Scottish Sports, has for so long been accorded to it.

EDINBURGH, *January* 1878.

CONTENTS OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

PAGE

RECOLLECTIONS OF MY EARLY LIFE, ... 1

INTRODUCTION, ... 37

"SPORT."

Moderation in Sport—Exercise—Rifle marksmen not necessarily successful sportsmen—Poetry of Sport—Influence of Sport on the race—Sir William Murray of Ochtertyre—A shark in the Solway, ... 42

DEER-STALKING.

No sport more dependent on the weather—Difficulty of knowing the points when the wind strikes fair—Novices generally miss from nervousness—Good nerves the great requisite for good shooting—American backwoodsmen and their ill-poised rifles—The old Highland deer-stalker—The left-shouldered man—Very deliberate shooting necessary for deer—Best stalking weather—Bright sun—High wind—Mist—South and west wind—High and low passes—Ox deer or "heaviers"—Best time for a quiet shot—Stalking between deer—Down hill—Quick sight of foresters—Best chances at old harts—Deer drives—Risk of the herd seeing—Glenartney Forest—The Black Mount—Its fine deer—Peter Robertson—Deer duel—Shooting one of the combatants—The virtuoso—The stag's bath—Crafty harts—The tame stag of Taymouth—Massy antlers, . 69

DEER-DRIVING IN MULL.

"A good head"—Bentalla—Scalastal—Glenforsa—The Knock pass—The "Ugly Buck"—THE GARROCHREE STAG—The eight-barrelled rifle—The first eight—"Roaring like mad"—"Look oot, sir, for anither"—Black-game on Garmony—The Garrochree stag again—The "Ugly Buck" deserts—Maclean and his collie—The last of the stag—Deer in the water—A CONTRETEMPS—Arnan hill—The missing hart, 97

WILD-GOATS.

A substitute for deer—Their splendid horns and long hair—Their game and tact—Erratic habits even of the tame goat—The truants from Glenforsa and Tyndrum—Goat-stalking—CRAP-NA-GOWER—The bearded chief—His territories invaded—Chief and henchman slain, . . 123

ROE-HUNTING.

The haunts of the roe—Common mistakes in hunting—Its sylph step—Cautions—Fox-hounds the best dogs to drive the roe from covert—Small belts—Blood-hounds—The roe's sagacity—Its dislike to the fallow deer—Roe islands in Loch Lomond—Their loch passes—Capturing them in boats—Tame roe—GLENFALLOCH ROES—The Baron of Bradwardine on roes and venison—His fallacies—The fatness of Glenfalloch roes—Tame does—Winter roe-shooting—A buck in the hand worth two in the bush—The last day in Glenfalloch—The three roes—Fierceness of roe in defence of her young, ... 136

SEAL-SHOOTING.

The test of Highland sportsmanship—"Bagging" seals—Monster seals—Loch-na-gaul—Mr Henry's luck—Seal-stalking on the Sound of Mull—A seal at bay—Fight between dog and seal, ... 165

CAPERCAILZIE-SHOOTING.

Shooting among the fir-woods, ... 179

GROUSE AND BLACK-GAME SHOOTING.

General rules for August and September—The steep side of a hill—A detached range—Evening feed—Preserved ground—Squeakers—An attraction—*Coup d'œil* not to be trusted—Never choose a range without a word from shepherds and hillmen—The effect of food on the colour of birds—The top or brow of a hill—The steep peak—Windy weather—Sultry days—Advance on grouse if possible from lower ground—Best time of day to commence—Advice to a man unaccustomed to climb hills—When birds become strong on the wing—As the season advances a larger gun requisite—Minute rules for the sport at this time—BLACK-GAME—Old cocks—their food—Apt to seek the shade of brackens—Their wildness—How to get a shot at them on the stubbles—When the fields become bare—Shooting them in covert, ... 182

PTARMIGAN-SHOOTING.

The wild haunts of the ptarmigan—"That thing on the tap o' the rock"—A second visit to Ben Voirla—A PTARMIGAN DAY—Ptarmigan ground—The scaurs of Ben Loy—Chasing ptarmigan—Ptarmigan on Dundeveuch, . . 209

THE ALPINE OR WHITE HARE,

SOMETIMES CALLED THE BLUE HARE.

Its playful look when started—Times of changing colour—The brightness or dinginess of its coat a criterion of the severity or mildness of the winter—Eagle and hill-hare—Strong position of the Alpine hare in presence of the foe—Miniature stalking—Great increase of hill-hares—Their snow-burrows, ... 231

WOODCOCKS AND SNIPES.

Regularity of flight—Prefer open ground at first—Come to the covert—Spring at dusk—Shooting woodcocks—Irregular belts of plantation—Narrow strips—Large tangled copses on the steep hillside—Woodcocks breed in the islands of Loch Lomond—Their evening flight—Mire-snipes—Jacks, ... 238

SEA-FOWL SHOOTING IN THE FIRTH OF FORTH.

Driving with beaters—The true sportsman—May the month for sea-fowl shooting—Bewildering number of birds—Eider-shooting—Great northern diver—Cormorants—The Fiddery coast—The hooded merganser—The black guillemots—A voyage to the May—The inland lochs—THE BASS ROCK—Its appearance when first seen—Numerous varieties of sea-fowl—Raven and peregrine—Martyr's cells—The look down—A ponderous son of Vulcan floored—A pithy smuggler—Cliffmen—Old Jack—Canty Bay, . 246

WILD-FOWL SHOOTING ON THE HIGHLAND LOCHS.

The squire and the clod—No fantastic shooting-suits or black Newfoundlands allowable—An awkward allowance—A wild-fowl shooter must be hardy—Suitable dress—His gun and shot—Wild geese—Suitable retriever—Gruff—How to approach fowl—When about to fire—To leeward of ducks and widgeon if possible—Their noses, however, "not worth a straw"—Springy drains—A shot at ducks in March—Morillons—The golden-eye—When several are diving together—When the flock is large—When the water is shallow—Dun-birds—How to manœuvre them—Tufted and scaup ducks—Goosander, red-throated diver, &c.—Wild swans—Widgeon and teal-shovellers—A large loch—The harvest moon—The winter storm—Open weather—Misty frost—*Sitting* shots the only proof of skill, ... 277

THE PEAT ISLE.

Its attractions for wild-fowl—Spring and summer visitors—Winter, or *the* season—Crowded with company at that time—The Castle of Galbraith—Eight days' duck-stalking during the gay season, ... 300

DOGS FOR THE GUN.

A dog's qualifications—The near ranger—A couple at a time sufficient—The head the chief criterion—Artful dog-breakers—Stern correction necessary—Running in when the bird drops—Diffidence of young dogs—Attention to the strain—Crosses—Rambling—Spaniels—Scotch terriers—Retrievers—Old Gruff—"Few dogs, but good," . 323

INSTINCT OF DOGS.

Instinct equally distributed among different breeds—The cocker and the post-bag—Treatment has a good deal to do with sagacity—Cigar—Gruff—St Bernard—Qualifications of a retriever—Ross of Tongue—Seal-coursing—REMARKS ON INSTINCT AND REASON—Greyfriar's Bobby—Auk and the hare—Curly and the walking-cane—Gruff goes to church—His journey from Cladich to Lennie—Travels of dogs—The power of scent—Setters retrieving—Mutual understanding among dogs—Memory among brutes—The sea-eagle an example, . . . 341

NATURAL HISTORY AND SPORT OF BUTE.

Sportsmen-naturalists—Kames Castle—No adders in Bute—Gluttonous reptiles—The slow-worm—The cane or mouse-killer—The birds of Bute—Number of magpies—The last ospreys of Loch Lomond—Fishing kestrels—Poaching rooks—The rooks of Kames—Albinos—Starlings—Owls—The short-eared owl—The night-jar—Migrants—Swifts—Skylarks—Finches—Stormy-petrels—Fern owl—The

D.D. cuckoo—Pigeons—"Silver haddies"—A hermit seal—Wasps' nests—Bats—Sport on Kames—Glenmore valley—Rodobach partridges—Variations in colour—Mire-snipes—Winter shooting on the Kyles—Wild ducks—Herons—Rod-fishing 371

APPENDIX.

TRAPPING THE TRUE AND LEGITIMATE WAY TO DESTROY VERMIN—GROUSE DISEASE—COWAL SPORT—ADDITIONAL FRAGMENTS: Birds of prey and grouse—Grouse disease—The "Hunter's badge"—The thrush—The gowk and the titling—Grey shrike in Dumbartonshire—The harmless kestrel—A torpid shepherd—Peregrine and curlew—The London physician and Celtic ghillie—Wild goats in Polew—Guillemots driven up the river Fyne near Inverary, by a gale of wind, in October 1882—The sparrow tree—LIST OF MY SHOOTING-PLACES, ... 421

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS TO VOL. I.

Portrait of the Author, . . .	*Frontispiece*
A Relic of the Clan Colquhoun, . .	*page* 72
Head of Hart, ...	" 90
Head of Fallow Deer, ...	" 91
Horns of Wild Goat, ...	" 124
Roebuck cleaning his Horns, . . .	" 136
Hybrid between Grouse and Black-Game, .	" 207
Ptarmigan in their usual Attitude, . .	" 210
Heads of the Alpine and Common Hares, .	" 233
Retriever for Loch Shooting, . . .	" 284
Pointers (*two plates*), ...	" 326

RECOLLECTIONS OF MY EARLY LIFE.

SOME able critics of the fourth edition of this work suggested that if a fifth followed, a sketch of the author's early days would be welcome to his readers. This has been called for much sooner than I expected; and in giving a short sketch of my early life, let me hope that it has had enough variety to give an account of it some interest.

I was born in Edinburgh, 6 Charlotte Square, on the 6th of March 1805. My mother was the Lady Colquhoun of Luss, whose life was written by the Rev. Dr Hamilton (London) in 1847. My first tutor came to Rossdhu when I was eight years old, he himself being only sixteen. He was a tall, long-legged youth, with a whey-coloured face and shy awkward manner, which shaded considerable shrewdness and ability, even keeping the hasty observer from noting the high principle which guided every deed of his life. He was the son of the min-

ister of St Madoes, had profited by an excellent education, and looked much more than his age.

My father generally took us to Edinburgh, at Christmas, for three months, passing the rest of the year at Rossdhu. My eldest brother and I were placed at school for these three months, our master being the well-known Benjamin Mackay (afterwards of the High School). By our young tutor's active help, shortly before leaving Edinburgh I worked my way to the top of the class. Before school closed, however, I lost my place to third dux; and my father, who had promised half-a-crown to either of us who was first, gave me only a shilling, as I had not *come home* in my proud place. My zealous prompter and I both thought this very "hard lines."

My parents thinking poor "Samuel long-legs," as his pupils nicknamed him, too young for his post, filled it by a candidate for the ministry, who hailed from Moffat, and was by no means the scholar his boy-predecessor had proved himself to be. Besides, he had his head so full of being one of the rising constellations of the Church of Scotland, that my poor lessons were deemed a very paltry consideration; and on my returning to school the following winter, Mr Mackay, *alias* "Benjy," said bluntly—to our tutor's intense mortification,—"Why, sir, he is not the same boy he was last year!" He was soon afterwards (certainly not for his scholastic attainments) presented by my father to Arrochar

Church, and his place was taken by a burring specimen of Berwick-on-Tweed. He, too, was a licentiate of the Church; and my teaching in Greek and Latin under his auspices fared even worse than it did with the minister of Arrochar. However, we had a fourth instructor, but his department was sport, not classics. He was a footman, reared in the establishment of the grandfather of the present Lord Haddington, who kept a pack of hounds, and was thought the leading Scotch hunting sportsman of his day.

Tom Yule was only a youth when my father engaged him, and yet he was an expert swimmer, a noted race-runner, understood all the arcana of trapping vermin, was an excellent judge of a terrier, and, by some secret influence, supplied us with a fine-bred animal from the Laird of Mellerstain's kennel. We never heard an oath or any foul language escape him in his most unguarded moments; and when my eldest brother and I left home soon afterwards for an English school, our worst minor grievance was parting with kindly Tom.

My father took us himself to the Rev. Mr Grainger's of Winteringham, in Lincolnshire, and after introducing us, left immediately. We felt bitterly forlorn, never having been from home before, and hardly understanding the lingo of the Sassenachs, whose ways and habits we could not endure. Our master was a thorough pedagogue — what in Scotland is called a "dominie"—and fancied that being a first-

class man at Oxford, or among the top wranglers at Cambridge, was, in his own phrase, the *summum bonum* of human bliss. He tried to imbue his pupils with the same idea, and taught them that the love of field-sports was ruin to boys, while those who entered the army were irreclaimable. The *physique* of Mr Grainger was certainly peculiar. He had a bald head and square body; shapeless legs, and long, splay feet, without a vestige of instep, giving one the idea of a toad standing on its hind-legs; but his eye was the very reverse of the full mild orb of that reptile. It is said that the toad and the lark have exchanged eyes; but our governor's was a severe, prying eye, quite unlike that bird's; and when in a passion (no seldom occurrence), it glared on its victim with the malignity of an incensed viper.

Mr Grainger's only sister, who kept his house, may be described as the primmest of prim old maids. Her gown was a hundred years out of date, waist up to her shoulders, without a morsel of padding, natural (!) or acquired, surmounted by a mob-cap white as snow, under which wriggled a few curls like the wires of a mouse-trap. Behold her as Jehu-ine in a high, brimless straw-bonnet, seated in a little basket-carriage the size of a wheel-barrow. It was drawn by a pair of small brown donkeys—the longest-legged Sunday-school boy, with his precocious knee-breeches and calfless legs, tearing in front as running footman! Can I ever behold the like again?

This grotesque brother and sister were branded by their mother (an admirer of Young) with the euphonious names of Lorenzo and Lavinia; and Miss Lavinia was persuaded that "bruther" was the wisest, most learned, nay, even the greatest man in the world. This was scarcely wonderful, considering the dogmatic bumptious way in which he settled the most profound questions of politics or theology. "Let a man answer me Paley's 'Evidences' and then *I'll* speak to him," said he of a noted infidel, at that time lecturing in the village.

The only point on which the eccentric couple were not agreed was the discipline of the school. The fair Lavinia thought her brother was too severe on the tricky rogues, and too lenient to the quiet, reserved boys. When she caught a mischievous rascal in a scrape, she dealt a reproof so absurdly caricaturing what she thought "bruther" would have said, that the scapegrace was only kept from explosive laughter by the certainty that she had but to speak the word to let loose on him the fiery Lorenzo's cutting cane.

Freshly as on the day it happened, I remember when "old Lorry" left home one afternoon, and three of the best-behaved lads in the school were at "high-jinks" in the schoolroom. The biggest (afterwards a high wrangler at Cambridge) was sprawling prostrate on the floor, and his companions, as they termed it, "riding him to Brentford." At this juncture they upset a large tin jug of water. The crash summoned

Lavinia, who, quietly opening the door and seeing who were the culprits, cast up her hands and eyes and withdrew without saying a word. On "bruther's" return, she sent for the doomed trio, and after exhausting every term of reproach her feeble mind could suggest, ended by saying, "One would not have believed it, if one hadn't seen it, that human natur could have been so depraved!" To do "old Lorry" justice, he was a painstaking and laborious teacher, so that the years we passed in his unique establishment were anything but thrown away.

On leaving our Lincolnshire school, my brother and I matriculated in the Edinburgh University, and as the session lasted only five months, and the recess seven, we had plenty of time to indulge our shooting and fishing tastes, in spite of a course of study prescribed by my uncle, the author of 'Isis Revelata.' My father made a point of our studying the philosophic books recommended by his brother—although he would have been loath indeed to have read even a few pages of them himself.

Professor Wilson (Christopher North) had newly been appointed to the Chair of Moral Philosophy in the modern Athens. As he had blurred and blotted his course of lectures by frequent interlines, it was often difficult for him to discover his own meaning, although, when it broke upon him, he always closed his sentence with a burst of eloquence which elec-

trified the class. The new professor gave a grand ball, to which some half-dozen of his students, my brother and I amongst the number, were invited. Christopher was in his glory, the fun was "fast and furious," and could Lorenzo and Lavinia have peeped in, they would not have survived the shock!

Our Edinburgh career ended, my brother went to the Continent for two years, and I joined the 33d Regiment (The Duke's Own), in the wilds of Connaught. This savage district was quite overrun by smugglers of "poteen" whisky, and the chief business of the military was to protect the excise. Escorts were demanded for that purpose at any hour of the day or night; and as captains were exempt from the duty, and some of the subalterns were not very hardy, I had my full share of the work. The exciseman had his "spy," whose office was to find out all the illicit stills for miles round, and for this purpose he had in his pay every unprincipled bog-trotting blackguard to be bribed by money. Oftenest at dead of night, muffled and disguised, they skulked into Roger O'Connor's little Star Chamber, having no scruple in betraying their nearest relations. Roger then arranged with his superior, the "gauger," for a party from the barracks.

Instead of my ending the evening luxuriously, with the prospect of a good night's sleep, a rap would be heard at the door of the mess-room, and the important face of the sergeant-major would appear,

with, "A party for the excise—Mr Colquhoun first for duty!" In place of his warm bed, therefore, Mr Colquhoun had before him a march through bogs and morasses during the long winter night.

"Roger O'Connor, the spy," was a short, thick-set man, about fifty. In face and figure he strongly reminded me of Dr Chalmers. His brow was very like that of the great preacher; and, indeed, it needed a man of no common intellect to fill his important if degrading post. A chat with Roger was always a treat,—for he told the ways of the natives, with stories of their lawless habits, which, but for him, I never could have heard.

One night, at Christmas time, a head squire, one of the chief supporters of "the Plains of Boyle Hunt," had asked my friend Captain Reid and me to a ball where all the *élite* for miles in the neighbourhood were expected. We returned to the barracks at 4 A.M., when I found a brother subaltern, looking very forlorn, preparing to head an excise party summoned some hours before.

"My dear fellow, you don't know how kind I should feel it if you would take my place to-night!" I agreed at once, exchanged my ball dress for my "still-hunting" rig, and was ready to follow Roger and his chief.

The night was pitch-dark, so Roger kept the public road till within a quarter of a mile of the cabin where the still was at work. He then made

us follow single file, and with wonderful address placed the escort of soldiers so as to prevent escape, if possible, from the shed where the whisky was brewing. We heard the unsuspicious gang mashing away; but it was so dark that we could not see a foot beyond our noses. All of a sudden a report sounded through the gloom. The smugglers disappeared in a trice, and Roger, with the gauger, rushing up, found the still in full work, but the prisoners flown! We were all soon in the full glare of the fire, and the exciseman taxed the soldiers with having given them warning. On my honour I assured him that not a sound had escaped the lips of my men. The rogues grinned and chuckled to each other at my pledge, which merriment, though it escaped the gauger, intent on his seizure, was not lost on the watchful Roger. It was then near daybreak, and he proposed returning through the bogs in search of "singlings" and "pot-ale."

In ransacking the cabins, harrowing scenes of misery were often brought to our notice. On that night, in a mud hut, with a single-stringed fiddle, Paganini-like, sat a blind boy by the fire. "When did he lose his sight?" I asked. "Sure, it was last year in the bog; the tunder and lightning struck him!" "Did he feel it sorely?" "Ochone! but he was bad at the first; but he's better since we got him the fiddle." I gave his father a few shillings

to buy strings, in which he faithfully promised to invest.

On nearing Boyle, a seizure was made of "singlings" tubs and troughs, of course forfeited to the excise. A smart girl caught hold of a tub, making off with it at the top of her speed. The gauger told a soldier to follow. Shackled with her burden, she was soon overtaken; but when he laid hands on her, I roared out, "Let that woman go, and come back instantly!" The recruit slunk back sheepishly. "Who told you to do that?" I inquired. The soldier pointed to the gauger. "Then take your orders from your officer, and not from the exciseman, in future!" "That's a rale good afficher!" was the delighted verdict of more than one poteen-loving Paddy.

Tramping through some very marshy ground soon afterwards, the soldiers—many of them recruits from Glasgow and Yorkshire—floundered sadly. It was then the time for Roger, who had not forgotten their former mirth at his expense. "They laughed in the still-house, let them laugh now and welcome!" was plainly to be read in his malicious leer. He was standing temptingly on the brink of an ugly moss-hole. I slipped up behind, and gave him a vindictive push; but being a true child of the bogs, with an agility wonderful and unexpected, he cleared the danger narrowly, though the sight of his heavy body and large hob-nailed brogues flying through the air was rare nuts to the red-coats.

The greatest personal friend I made in Ireland was Coote Molloy. He was a very clever fellow, and took, if I remember rightly, the second place in the final examination of Dublin University. His family was very intimate with the Edgeworths of Edgeworthstown, and he himself was a close ally of the famous priest Maguire.[1] It was the latter who engaged in the three days' controversy with the well-known Protestant clergyman, Mr Pope. "Sporting Tom Macguire" spent his life in the society of Protestant young men of position, avoiding those of his own persuasion.

These young men were of opinion that "Father Tom" was an infidel, as he often outlaughed them at the superstitions of his own Church. On one occasion, when a Roman Catholic refused a day's trial of "Tom's" greyhounds, on their way to a coursing meeting, the priest exclaimed, with a curse on his head, "If he had been a Prætestant he would niver have said me no!" On that day he quartered, for greater security, in the Roman Catholic chapel, a bitch he was sure would run high in the stakes. In the middle of the priest's good dinner, the verger banged open the door, crying out, "Ochone! ochone! the bitch!" "Is she lame?" quoth Tom. "Quite sound; but oh! the bitch! the bitch!" "Is she in pup?" "No, no, your riverence! but, save and

[1] Maguire was the "Father Tom" of Sir Samuel Ferguson's well-known story in 'Blackwood'—"Father Tom and the Pope."

preserve us, she's drunk up all the holy wāter!" "Never mind," replied the priest, greatly relieved; "she'll catch the great Divil himself if he rises before her."

As Coote Molloy was a most enthusiastic naturalist and sportsman, we were inseparable, never tiring of these subjects, often comparing the relative merits of Scotch and Irish wild sport, and birds or animals of game and prey. He had two small deer-parks—one stocked with fine varieties of fallow deer, and the other with the white-faced dun deer of Killarney. Many a dispute we had whether the red deer of the Highlands and the fallow bucks of my father's Loch Lomond island (Inch Lonaig) were not equal to, perhaps better than, Coote Molloy's paragons. Whenever there was a *battue*, an invitation always came me. On one occasion, after a severe day in the coverts, I was awakened next morning by a loud knock at my barrack-room door. On hearing the usual "Come in," a magnificent specimen of the Spanish type of Irishman appeared, with the assurance that he resolved to "list" with my honour, having been one of our "baters" the day before. Very proud of my recruit, I shouted for my servant to give him "the shilling," a glass of whisky, and a good breakfast. However, before my dressing was finished, sounds of weeping and lamentation were heard in the passage. On opening the door, a young woman fell on her knees, begging me for the love of

God to save her husband, as he was the only support of herself and three helpless children. On listening to the poor wife's story, it was plain I had fallen into a scrape. There was comfort, however, in knowing that the cross old Major had gone on leave, and my friend Reid, captain of grenadiers, was temporary commandant. When I went down to the mess-room, a special messenger from Coote Molloy handed a note, begging me to keep the man from enlisting, as it would cause such misery to his family. "All right now," I thought, for Reid was a known admirer of Miss Molloy. Opening the mess-room door, where all were seated at breakfast, I beckoned to Reid, and told him the dilemma, showing him Coote's letter. The good-natured fellow made for the orderly-room, cancelled the whole affair, and restored the man to his weeping wife, who marched him off in triumph.

If little fat Fogarty the Major had not taken himself off, there *would* have been a row!

Hunting in the "plains of Boyle" was a novelty to me. There were no foxes; but the Irish hare before fox-hounds made so good a substitute, that they were hardly missed. These hares were extremely long-winded and strong on their legs. There was seldom much time wasted for a "find," as a little old man clad in a red coat (the cast-off toggery of the hunt) rarely failed to have marked down a hare on her form, guiding "Crevy" the huntsman

at once to the spot. This amusing creature was called "Soho," and the hunt-catering, for which his quick eye and lithe frame aptly fitted him, was his only means of living. At Christmas he always levied his tax on every hunting man of the field, never forgetting to call at the barracks. Captain Reid and I were the only officers of our regiment who hunted. Each had a first-rate hunter trained for "the plains," and between us we hired a stable and Irish groom. The leaps were chiefly over stone walls, and many of the horses tipped them in the most dexterous manner. So deftly did they touch the top of the wall, that, after a horse and his rider had cleared it, I have seen a tottering stone rattle down directly afterwards. Yet from this cause I never saw an accident. In fact, the "tippers" were the safest horses on the "plains of Boyle."

Reid's horse and mine (for we could only afford one apiece) were magnificent "fliers," and when fresh could clear a five-feet wall. We did not care to hunt them oftener than once a-week; but if spared, and *judiciously* ridden, they might be taken out twice occasionally. As mine was rather light for my weight, I sold him, and bought in his place a famous black horse, well named "Pepper," one of the best wall-clearers and soundest horses of county Connaught. His price was £70—a long figure for an Irish horse in those days.

When the meet was near Boyle, a number of the

peasants followed the chase on foot, and as they knew the country well, they managed by short cuts to see a good deal of the sport. They congregated at any dangerous leap, and when a daring rider took it, always shouted "*Sooksess!*" Reid and I were among the leaders of the hunt; and once when both of us had been greeted with this applause from Paddy, when he met some of our men, he told our feat, having had the curiosity to measure the leap.

In time I was appointed to command the subaltern's party at Keadew—fifteen miles farther into the wilds. Having marched over my men with their baggage, and arranged everything, I returned to Boyle for the pay of the detachment. Riding back on a rugged Irish pony, an ill-looking man bounced out of a shebeen, gave a loud whistle, and peered round as if looking for a companion. I put spurs to my pony and trotted away. Two miles farther the same man came in sight by a side path, having taken a short cut. He was much heated, having run the whole way. Of course I urged the wretched pony as fast as it could go; but did not feel safe till the Keadew barracks glimmered in the darkness.

On asking the Episcopal clergyman's son if he thought there was anything wrong, "Not much danger," he said; "of course you took the low road?" Hearing it was the other, a trifle shorter, he answered, "You don't mean to say you took the

high road; it has a very bad name, and you should never take it under any circumstances, but especially after dark."

Twilight had begun when my adventure took place, and half the distance was ridden in darkness. My men knew that I had gone for their money, and had most likely promised to pay some trifling debts in the village, as soon as their officer returned with their pay from Boyle. This hint was quite enough for an Irish assassin.

My first visitor at the barracks was the Roman Catholic priest. He was a quiet, well-conducted man, much respected by his flock. Almost the first words he spoke to me were,—"It will be well, sir, to save us both worry, if we appear on friendly terms from the beginning." He added, "Should my people quarrel with, or insult your soldiers, come to me and I will settle the matter; should the soldiers be in fault, I can give you a private hint, and find out the *real facts* easier than any one here." Priest Redican's advice was taken, and we had no trouble the whole time.

People in England and Scotland fancy that the Irish peasants are completely in the power of the priest, whatever his character may be. This is a mistake. The neighbouring priest, Donnelly, was an unprincipled, profligate scoundrel. During my stay there, a woman knocked him down with a shovel for insult, when he took no notice. He was openly

jeered at by the men, and cursed by the women. A Roman Catholic proprietor told me the following story: On Sunday, Priest Donnelly performed Mass at his chapel, after which ceremony he rushed into his house, begging to know when dinner would be ready, as he was starving. A leg of mutton was soon on the table. The layman ate a fair dinner, but the priest picked the joint to the bones. All the whisky in the house was drunk between them, when the host found himself very tipsy. The priest asked if there was nothing more to be had; and his boon companion stuttered out that there was two-thirds of an excellent bottle of old brandy, but he was too unsteady to find it. The priest, however, by his directions, discovered the cognac, finding on his return his entertainer helpless under the table. Donnelly finished the bottle himself, and then the mountain of fat went to the stable, saddled his horse, and rode away.

Priest Redican told me one day that his bishop was coming, and invited me to meet him at dinner. After half promising, I rode over to Carrick, where another detachment of the 33d was quartered, to consult my captain.[1] The advice of that judicious

[1] Both Thain, my captain, and Reid were Waterloo officers, Thain being adjutant at that time. He gave me much excellent advice, and was the best soldier I ever met. Many a long instructive walk we had together, and seeing my bent, he urged me to follow natural history as a serious study. He was chosen as aide-de-camp by General Elphinstone, who was Commander-in-Chief during the first

man was, "Go, by all means, for you may get insight into Irish life; *but go in uniform.*"

Equipped in my shell-jacket, I went rather late to the chapel, where dinner was spread. There were at least thirty priests, presided over by the bishop,—a fine, imposing, though rather pompous-looking, man. He placed me courteously at his right hand, plying me with the best the table afforded. All went smoothly till the wine had flowed apace, when a cadaverous-visaged priest, named Boyd, rose to introduce strife by asserting that the "Duke of Wellington's Ministers" (then in power) "would go down soon to the obscurity from which they should never have emerged." With my red jacket flaring amongst the black coats, I was forced to get up and say if such language was applied to his Majesty's Government, I must withdraw. The bishop almost pushed me into my seat. "Leave him to me, sir," he said; "leave him to me, and I will soon show what I'll do!" He then rose, rowed Boyd soundly for his presumptuous audacity in introducing such subjects, and when he had fairly subdued him, resumed his seat with dignity.

On breaking up, a strong determined-looking priest said in my hearing, "If it had not been for the sacred place we were in, I should have pitched Boyd out of the window!"

Affghan war. The General broke down completely with rheumatic gout, after which Thain in fact commanded the force, when he was shot dead in the Khyber Pass.

Next morning, when sauntering out of barracks, a woman who supplied us with eggs and vegetables saluted me with, "Bless yer honour, I heard that Macnamara" (a noted duellist) "had shot you as dead as a red herring!" As Priest Redican was shaping his way towards me, without asking an explanation, I turned to meet him. He was much excited, and called out, as soon as I was within ear-shot, "I am told that fellow Boyd went to Captain Macnamara, urging him to call you out; but if the Captain comes here, I'se take the pistol in hand and foight him meself." That, I told him, would hardly do for me. "You may foight him *afterwards*, if ye plaise," answered the burly priest, in broader accents than usual; "but, by the powers, he shall *dale* with *me* first!"

For some days I heard nothing of Macnamara. Then I went to a fair a few miles off with the Episcopal clergyman's son. The first person we met was Priest Redican, who attached himself to us at once. Soon afterwards we met a middle-aged man like a sailor, riding a splendid hunter. "Captain," said the priest, "let me introduce Mr Colquhoun, who has charge of the company at the barracks." Macnamara (for it was he) saluted me courteously, gave an invitation to dinner for that day, entertained me hospitably, and in manner and appearance was the last man I should have suspected of a *penchant* for the trigger. We parted the best of friends.

About the beginning of August 1829 I was gazetted out of the 33d into the 4th Royal Irish Dragoon Guards. Of course I applied at once for the usual two months' leave to prepare my outfit, but was ordered peremptorily by the Colonel to join on the 10th. Had it even been on the 24th, I should have had at least eight or ten days of the best of the grouse-shooting; but there was no help for it. On joining, I found there were plenty of officers for duty, and that there was no immediate need for me. My outfit did not come for three weeks: so instead of ranging the Highland moors for grouse, I was forced to parade the barrack-square idle, in plain clothes. Then and now I consider such conduct a high-handed piece of red-tapism, for which there could be no excuse.

When the Christmas leaves came out, I applied again for mine, in hopes of the exciting wild-fowl sport of Loch Lomond. The answer was, that a great many were going on leave, amongst them the officer commanding the detachment at Beverley, whose place I was appointed to take. Then I resolved to ask no leave till next year's grousing,—when, by no little *finesse* on my part, I was granted three months from the 10th of July.

Having missed my shooting the first season, I consoled myself with Beverley hunting, as there were constant "meets" within easy reach of the town. My funds not allowing more horses than the needed chargers, I settled to buy the best in the

market. One was a seasoned worker of first-rate constitution, the other a colt of tremendous bone and muscle. I bought the latter out of the straw-yard, on my own judgment, for £96. From his build and colour I dubbed him "Brown Stout." He had been dismissed the riding-school as "broken" (without being broken down!) a short time before I left headquarters at York for Beverley, and by good hap had not been harmed by the rough-rider's treatment. It was a great pleasure to educate him entirely myself for the hunting-field, especially as he was a free-tempered, resolute animal, fit to carry a far heavier weight than mine. Every morning I schooled him over hedges and ditches, the chief leaps of the Beverley country. He seldom refused his jumps, taking them with coolness and precision. The first day he went out for real work was a splendid one for hunting. There was a very large turn-out of red-coats; but conspicuous in the field, no less by his fine presence than by his black hunting-dress, was the Rev. Mr Bower, familiarly styled "John Bower," one of the best and hardest riders in the kingdom. I kept near the black-coat when the hounds were thrown into cover, and very soon they "broke" in full view. Encouraged by such a leader, Brown Stout took every fence with unflinching nerve. There was a very "bold burst," and afterwards we had to trot through some soft, greasy, ploughed fields, when a huge drain

afterwards eight steeplechases, and was credited with a number of seconds, including the Irish Grand National, in which, with one or two exceptions, when Captain Farquhar was in the saddle, he was piloted by my son.

In 1867 he became the property of my son, who had then been promoted to his troop; after which, with his owner "up," he won the military steeplechase at Newbridge, and ran third for the Grand Military at Liverpool, on which occasion he was ridden by the late Mr Lawrence. It was at his own urgent request on the previous night that "Piggy" Lawrence was given the mount.

Puffy Dunter's career ended with the Grand National at Cork, where, in a field of seventeen, he was flattered with the top weight, twelve stone four, and in the opinion of my son, who rode himself, was winning easily, when he tripped at the last small bank. Although rather fast at his fences, he was a charming hunter. Puffy Dunter's colour was a rich bay with black points, and being very compactly built, with remarkably long quarters, standing unusually high behind, in form he bore a strong re semblance to the hare. There is a capital picture of him in my dining-room, which I prize much on account of his exploits.

At the time I sold out of the army, the fever for rowing and regattas was at its height. Every seaport town and village on the Clyde had its crew of

picked oarsmen, who strove in friendly competition with each other, till the champions of their own districts were acknowledged. Amongst the many excellent rowers of Glasgow, one four-oar was known to have outstripped every rival. The name of this gig was the "Clutha," the pride and glory of the western capital. At the time of which I write, that celebrated gig had newly returned from a tour to every noted English regatta, carrying off first honours in all, without having been once conquered. They had been beaten sometimes in their eight-oar, but always took the lead in their four. Another noted crew hailed from Greenock. They were trained by Mr Robertson the banker, well known in those days as "Jamie Robison," the owner of the clipper-yacht the "Rattlesnake," victorious in all sailing races of its own tonnage. Jamie was as proud of his four-oared gig as he was of the Rattlesnake; and as the Clutha was chief of the head of the Clyde, he was chief of the foot. These crews had never been fairly pitted against each other but once, which ended in a wrangle, though unbiassed onlookers affirmed that the Glasgow crew would have been victorious had the race been finished. The Glasgow men, at all events, were anxious to try again; but the others refused.

My two brothers and I began hard practice at once on Loch Lomond, taking as our fourth rower the best man of a Luss four-oar jolly-boat, trained

by ourselves for the jolly-boat races at the regattas. The gig, painted white, with black rim, was named the "Whistling Swan." Some of the old Luss people (amongst them the enterprising proprietor of the noted Edinburgh Royal Hotel, Mr Macgregor) speak still with pride of the part she took in those well-remembered rowing days. Soon afterwards, the famous Greenock crew broke up; but another was formed at once, of the most promising rowers of the town. This boat took the lead almost immediately of the lower waters of the Clyde, as completely as Mr Robertson had done before. In another year the "Clutha club" was dissolved too; but, Phœnix-like, there rose another on its ashes, called the "Waterwitch," which, even the noted crew owned, was not a whit inferior to themselves. The Helensburgh regatta was counted the best on the Clyde, partly from its central station, partly from its surroundings and advantages of water. All the county neighbours, and strangers from far, gathered to the favourite scene; and as the prizes were all "open," every gig and jolly-boat of the least pretension were competitors. It was known that the Glasgow Waterwitch, the Loch Lomond Whistling Swan, and the Greenock gig had all entered for the race which was to be the chief attraction of the day.

My eldest brother had been forbidden to row by his medical man. In this case we needed two men for our gig; and by hunting through Glasgow, I found

and engaged two of the former Clutha set, who agreed to practise. Very shortly, however, before the race, to my disappointment, a note came from one of them to say that his companion was unavoidably kept from fulfilling his promise. I engaged two of Jamie Robison's late crew at once, with shaken hopes of the Helensburgh Cup.

It was a glorious day in July. The lovely beach of the Clyde was crowded with every kind of craft; and the shores were lined with all sorts of conveyances, from the crested barouche down to the crofter's gig. The competing crews were standing round, some looking very nervous. The spectators were busy calculating the results of the different races with eager partisanship. Never having rowed with them before, my brother and I had taken a spurt or two to try our three and four; but neither of us liked their style. It was too high, deep-sea rowing to please us, and we wished heartily that their place had been kept by the Glasgow men.

It was some time before the great race of the day came off. Then the three rival crews rowed to their stations without a sound being heard from the mass of people on land and water. The start, in boating phrase, was "level." Before many minutes the Greenock gig was tailed off, and the struggle was between the Waterwitch and the Whistling Swan. The Glasgow men spurted for the lead; but on calling on my crew, they did not heartily respond,

so the Waterwitch went fairly ahead of us. I felt sure that our opponents' stroke was too quick, and that if their lead was not increased, my slower one ought to wear them out. However, they rounded the distance-buoy first; and when our men turned, I saw that we had gained on them. Quickening my stroke, I again asked for a spurt; but the Waterwitch steersman was determined to give us the wash of their boat. So we were obliged to bump their stern, and the race being declared "foul," was ordered to be rowed again.

My brother and I, feeling sure that we had not been properly supported, resolved to be free of our three and four by offering to row a two-oar race for the Cup. On challenging the stroke and bow of the Waterwitch, the answer was that they were willing to row the four-oar race over again; but if a two-oar was wanted, they must be allowed the choice of their crew. This was rather startling, for the middle men were the pith and marrow of their gig. Their rowing weight was 12 stone each; whereas mine was 11 stone, and my brother's only 10. It occurred to us, however, that if they agreed to fix a day for the trial about the middle of September, we should have had a month's grouse-shooting, and so be in the finest training condition possible. My answer was, "We shall be glad to row any two of your men, and make also a bet of £10 on the result." This offer was joyfully accepted. We heard afterwards our rivals were

sure of the Cup, as it was their boast that the Waterwitch was the swiftest two-oar gig on the Clyde, and their two men the champion rowers of the river.

Every day after the "12th" my brother and I were out early on the rugged hills of Loch Lomond, always coming back in time for a few spurts on the lake, to keep our arms in trim.

On the day of the struggle, we both felt sure that if we were beaten it could be only by weight, as our rowing condition could not be excelled. On stepping into the carriage, bound for Helensburgh, my mother came to the door, and said kindly, "I wish you success in both your ventures!" What the other venture was will soon be told.

There were upwards of two thousand people on the Helensburgh shore when we drove up, and at the same time the Glasgow steamboat, with our opponents on board, landed at the pier. I walked to the harbour at once, to make sure that our gig was all right, and my brother went to the inn, where the umpire and Glasgow crew joined him. My brother very soon hurried to me, calling out that if I did not come directly we should be "done for," as our rivals were insisting to make it a *four* instead of a *three* mile race. There was time for me to consider before reaching them, and judging that our training was a greater advantage than their weight, on which they seemed to rely, my answer was, "Make it a four-

mile race, by all means; for in my opinion the boat which shows first after the three miles, will not be last after the four."

The agreement was not to "toss oars;" so when the gun fired we bounded off together, our opponents' stroke much the quickest. However, I had taken a hint from the former race, and rowed an even, determined pull, persuaded that our rivals' stroke was too short and quick to last. At this stage my brother "skiffed" the water, coming down on my back. He was right again in an instant, but in that moment the Waterwitch jumped past us two boat-lengths. "Fifty pounds on Glasgow!" exclaimed an enthusiastic citizen of the western metropolis. No takers. Both gigs rowed resolutely to the buoy, when our steersman whispered, "We are close to the other boat!" "Keep inside," I answered. Our adversaries were evidently "pumped out." Hurrah for the hills of Glen Luss and Glen Fruin! The steersman of the Waterwitch rather bungled his round of the buoy; and our lad, following my advice skilfully, took the inside place. To save my brother, I backed with all my might, and when both gigs were fairly turned, our bow was level with their mid-oar. "Give it them home now!" shouted the stroke, quickening the time. The bow responded well, and the Whistling Swan shot past the Waterwitch like a Derby winner. The race was then really over. Our plucky opponents, how-

ever, struggled bravely for a time, and did not stop till it was absurd to continue longer. We came in nearly a quarter of a mile ahead, amidst the ringing cheers of the crowd. The silver cup, with its inscription, is of course an heirloom at Rossdhu.

International football, and international rifle-shooting matches, are now annual institutions, and this year an international golf-match has been added to the list. In all of these trials of skill between England and Scotland, I may assert, without fear of contradiction, that my countrymen have at least "held their own." There has, however, been only one boat-race between the two countries, which took place on October 30, 1839, when the professional Watermen of the Thames contended with the Cardross Ferrymen of the Clyde. The stakes were £300 a-side, the backers being English and Scottish gentlemen. The Mersey was chosen for the struggle, as it was the most convenient half-way river for both parties; and a few days before the race each crew arrived at Liverpool, to practise for it in secret—if possible! From a quiet glance at some of their trial spurts, I felt sure that if the Clyde won, it would be little short of a miracle. The English crew consisted of Charles Campbell (stroke), ex-Champion of the Thames, Phelps of Fulham, Pocock of Lambeth, and Robert Combes, at that time Champion of England. As it was found that the ex- and present champions did "not pull well together" (not in the *literal* sense),

Combes's place was taken by George Campbell, a younger brother of Charles, the steersman being William, another brother, about ten years older.

The English crew seemed hearty and affable, the Scotch surly and repellent. The former appeared smiling at victory, the latter frowning at defeat. When George was seated bow, Pocock chuckled to me, "This is our little blackberry, sir; but we mean to make a mulberry of him after the race."

Robert Combes was not the man to submit meekly to such a slap in the face. He gathered a second crew of Thames men at once, having the well-known "Paddy Noulton" as bow, and appeared at Liverpool ready to challenge "the winners" next day. Of course he meant his rivals from the Thames, for he remarked to a friend of mine, pointing contemptuously to the Clyde men, "Oh, sir, they can't help beating *that* crew!"

When the exciting morning came, there was more wind than the Londoners liked; but the Scotchmen were of opinion that they "wadna' be the waur o' a bit jummel o' sea." The post of starter was given to me, and I was accompanied in the boat by Mr Congreve, the stroke-oar to the first Christ Church gig when a graduate at Oxford. The crews were so fidgety that I was obliged to make them "toss oars" three times. At the last they got away from a level start. For a quarter of a mile the waves were so decided that the Thames men dared not let

out, for fear of shipping water. However, as soon as the gigs got under lee of the shore, the watermen pulled right away from the ferrymen, giving them a most disastrous beating.

The struggle over, Combes came up to challenge Charles Campbell for the following day; but he answered that they would row against him only on the Thames. Combes then offered to give the Scotch crew a hundred yards, and row them for the original stakes; but this was prudently refused, as there is little doubt that it would have ended in a still more humiliating failure. At this juncture another crew, belonging to the Chester side of the Mersey, near the estate of Mr Congreve's father, stepped forward and offered to row against the Scotchmen for £100. Congreve, who knew their rowing thoroughly, assured me that the Clyde men had a fine opportunity of partly retrieving themselves, as he felt sure "that they could lick the heads off the Chester men." However, the Clyde rowers were so disheartened, not to say *cowed*, as to refuse the prospect of almost certain victory, although my youngest brother would have put down the £100 for them rather than let the race be balked. In fact, they were completely "in the sulks;" and a renewal of this ill-starred competition on the part of Scotland has never been mooted since that day.

It is now time for me to speak of the other "venture" hinted at by my mother. This was to

offer my hand to her who had won my affection in the summer, though I will not trust myself to speak of her beauty in mind and person. Immediately after our rowing victory, I left Scotland for Park Place, near Henley-on-Thames, the home of her parents, and one of the loveliest places I have ever seen. Mr Fuller Maitland accepted my offer, and I won my prize. My partner was the joy and life of our numberless Highland and Lowland homes, —loving the people, traditions, music, and history of her adopted country, with an enthusiasm equal to my own. In these volumes are chronicled the events of our many shooting-quarters, so it is needless to allude to them more, except to say that on writing the somewhat fanciful chapter on the "Spirit of Glencroe," I asked my wife to make some verses wherewith to conclude it. About an hour afterwards she brought me the poem which closes the article, and is included in her 'Rhymes and Chimes,' published by Macmillan, and most favourably received by her critics and the public. These breathings of her imaginative mind were begun in early days, but were continued to the last.

Four sons and five daughters were born to us, all of whom are now living, one being the authoress of 'Mr Smith,' and other novels. For two years I have rented no shooting, nor taken out a game licence, and seldom even handled a fishing-rod. The pleasure of these sports has faded since the

faithful and generous heart which sympathised with them has ceased to beat. After a rough day on the moor or by the salmon-river, the sound of her dear voice was a joy I hardly fully valued till it was hushed for ever on earth, but which I am looking forward daily more and more to hearing ere long amongst the deep songs of the ransomed.

JOHN COLQUHOUN.

NOTE TO THE SIXTH EDITION.

THE family record given above has, alas! to be amended in some of its details. My comrade of the boat-race, after having been my partner in a different kind of boat, as my fellow-trustee over the Colquhoun and Luss estates, has passed away since the last edition of this book appeared. The two following paragraphs also tell of bereavement.

THE LATE COLONEL COLQUHOUN.

From the 'Courant,' March 1883.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL COLQUHOUN, of the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders, whose death was announced in our yesterday's obituary, was born on the 3d of March 1835. He was educated at the Edinburgh Academy, where he greatly distinguished himself both in classics and mathematics. From the Academy he went to the University of this city, and there gained the first prize for a mathematical essay open to both the classes of Professor Kelland. Colonel Colquhoun then went to Trinity College, Cam-

bridge; but after the first year, he resolved to turn his attention to the army, instead of following any of the learned professions. He joined and remained for ten years in the 4th Royal Dragoon Guards, the same regiment as his father, the genial author of the 'Moor and the Loch.' He was a keen sportsman and first-rate shot, both at deer and grouse, and also a splendid salmon-fisher. While cornet in the 4th Dragoon Guards, he gained the Duke of Cambridge's prize, and afterwards many other high prizes both at Wimbledon and elsewhere. He was elected last year vice-president of the Royal Caledonian Curling Club. Colonel Colquhoun married, in 1876, the youngest daughter of the late Mr Elliot of Clifton and Harewood, and is survived by her and two daughters. He was a Deputy-Lieutenant and Justice of the Peace for the county of Dumbarton, and a member of the Highland and Agricultural and other Societies. Since his marriage Colonel Colquhoun had the management of the Luss estates.

Captain Sutherland Grant Colquhoun.

From the 'Courant,' October 1882.

Captain Sutherland Grant Colquhoun, Seaforth Highlanders, who died last week at Inveran, was the youngest son of the author of the 'Moor and the Loch.' He was a young man of great talent and promise, the inventor of the "Colquhoun Continuous Brake;" and he was going to have taken out patents for other inventions, before starting, as he intended, for British Columbia to push his fortunes.

He was staying at Inveran, on Loch Maree, to shoot with a friend, when he was taken ill of typhoid fever.

THE MOOR AND THE LOCH.

INTRODUCTION.

THE superiority in pluck and endurance of hardship which the inhabitants of the British Islands have so long held over the other nations of Europe, is pretty generally admitted to be in no small degree due to the love and practice of our out-of-door recreations. Nowhere is this more fully acknowledged than in our army, where year by year additional facilities are given to colonels of regiments from headquarters for granting those under them as much sporting leave as is consistent with attention to duty. Many of our most distinguished commanders have openly expressed the opinion, that although a man who devotes all his time and energy to military duty may be an excellent and valuable parade officer, yet in actual service, when anything dashing was done, it was, in nine cases out of ten, by those who loved the hunting-field or the

grouse-mountain far better than the barrack-square; and that these were generally the most efficient officers in an arduous campaign.

The impetus given to the mental as well as the physical powers by healthy exercise no one denies, though hundreds profess themselves unable (more truly, perhaps, unwilling) to submit to the arduous experiment. An ordinary walk is not enough for a strong man who is at the same time an earnest student. In order to keep his mind up to the mark, he ought to accustom himself to hardship, and inure his limbs and muscles to fatigue. No doubt it is *hard laws* to a man in middle life, who has never done more than his "Saturday's walk," and a short stroll on the other days of the week, to send him up the steep mountain-side with a gun under his arm; but even he, by perseverance and practice, will become astonished at his own powers, and delighted with the probable result—health and strength of mind and body.

It is needless to say how few of us would endure this continual hardship and fatigue, were it not for the present excitement, which impetus is supplied by the love of hunting, innate, though often latent, in most manly and independent characters. I always sympathised with the Scotch poacher of fifty years ago, who, for the sheer love of sport, sallied out over the well-known hills, and with his quaintly broke collie dog and rusty single-barrel enjoyed himself to

the full. *He* never sold his game, but when he had more than his family could use, gave the rest to his neighbours. That is past and gone; the English squire first drove the poorer Scotch one out of the market, and he in his turn has been superseded by the millionaires from London, Manchester, and America. Incredible prices are given by the latter for all our first-class deer-forests and shootings, while the second-rate beats are as eagerly contended for by the men of less ample means; and now it is Sassenachs, protection, and keepers over the whole Highland range. This picture may not be a very bright one to a high-spirited and patriotic Scotchman: still it has its light as well as its shade. The almost fabulous rents paid for all the best beats bring money into the country; and the sportsmen, to say nothing of being fleeced by the natives, are lavish of their purses, which also swells the stream of wealth flowing into the Highlands. To recur to my opening sentence, not a few fine aristocratic young Englishmen, who without this rugged attraction would have been confined to the hunting-field, stubbles, and turnips, are initiated into the more hardening and fatiguing sports of the deer-forests and the grouse-moors. These are the young fellows to endure privations and suffer hardship; they have done it before for amusement, and can do it again for duty.

Highland touring was in vogue long before the *furore* for its wild sports began, and to the "Lord of

the buried past" we owe the interest first excited in the northern wilds. A Scotch tour, however, was in former days an expensive and often very uncomfortable luxury. Most of our southern neighbours were quite content with one trial, feeling satisfied that they had seen enough of the uncultivated region and its savages to last them all their lives. But when the country was opened up by steamboats and railways, and the natural consequences of better inns and conveyances followed—above all, when good shootings at very moderate prices were in the market—no wonder that even the cream of England's aristocracy looked forward to their autumn sojourn in the North as the most charming portion of the whole year.

Forty years ago there were no Scotch sporting books, and the few English ones were merely works of instruction and dry detail. Now, however, the Scotch books on mountain, forest, and river sport occupy no mean place in our national literature. How much these books stimulated the demand for Scotch shootings it would be difficult to say; at all events, wild shooting rose prodigiously in the market after their publication. Forty years ago capital small ranges were to be had for £150 to £180. The rapidity with which these rose to thrice that amount was most disheartening to keen grouse-shooters of moderate incomes. The competition for the first-class beats was even greater, and I have been told by agents that the claimants bid each other up

to such a figure that they were sometimes ashamed to take the highest offer.

Not many years ago there was always a tempting array of shooting-quarters advertised in February and March. At present, all the most desirable quarters are secured before coming into the market at all. The man of fortune who comes down to the North in early spring, reasonably confident of finding a really good shooting, has often to return sadly disappointed: there are none to be had for *love* or *money*.

"SPORT."

SPORT comprehends a variety of bodily and mental exercises combined, which produce pleasant excitement in their performance, and by anticipation of the result; and which have a definite object for their aim, the accomplishment of which is the motive-power. Take away all excitement from man, and existence would be a dull, dormant, stagnant thing, without interest, without object, and without joy.

By field-sports are usually meant hunting, shooting, and fishing—although cricket, football, and other outdoor games are sometimes included—and a sportsman is generally known as a devotee of the gun or rifle, of the fishing-rod or hunting-field: but this is simply, again, a conventional word; for, in reality, the whole human race are sportsmen or sportswomen.

The various forms in which the love of excitement or sport develops itself among the sons and daughters of men may be called legion; for there is not a grade

of healthy life, however monotonous it may seem to be, where a careful observer need long be puzzled to detect the sparkling spring that refreshes and brightens the dreary waste which, without it, life would certainly become.

To some, books and study are the only sport they can appreciate. A lad, who had much distinguished himself at school, was asked by a class-fellow to spend a part of the vacation with him on the banks of a noted salmon-river. The water being in excellent ply, the host intended for his friend the intense delight of hooking a salmon. What was his chagrin after breakfast next day, to find him under the shade of a huge tree surrounded by his tomes, and perfectly callous to all else except their absorbing contents! A remonstrance only brought down the retort that, "Apart from the cruelty, what amusement could there be in slaughtering fish or birds? For his part he could see none." Had these two lads exchanged occupations for the day, in place of sport it would have been misery to both.

A few years ago I paid a visit at a country-house, the proprietor of which was a sagacious and successful merchant. The shooting was good and varied, and a large party was arranged for a beat of the coverts, but "the Laird" did not join it. Next day, when driven by my host's coachman to the railway station, I said, "Your master does not seem to care much for the gun." "Bless you, sir, he cares more

for doing a smart stroke of business than for all the shooting in the county!"

A London millionaire curtly disposed of my humble pleading in favour of a short autumnal grouse holiday for young merchants, by "A young merchant, sir, should never have a holiday: I neither asked nor wanted holidays when I began my mercantile career; and you may take my word for it, success in business depends on giving your whole soul to it." I left him muttering, "If ever mother earth had a claim on her worm, now was her time to prefer it."

The journal of Sir Fowell Buxton records: "Talk to me of the excitement of the House of Commons—the best debate will not beat good woodcock-shooting." The philanthropist had, however, just come in from a successful day at the cocks, and, most likely, was very tired of long St Stephen's "sittings" in foul air. I daresay few *really* rising politicians would agree with the dictum of their half-worn-out brother; or, at all events, if field-sports were to interfere with their parliamentary course, would hesitate for a moment to allow them "to go to the wall."

When I was a youth, a London belle of the first water married the owner of large Highland possessions, comprehending, among other wild sports, superior salmon-angling. She became a noted rod-fisher, and used often to affirm that one season on the river was worth half-a-dozen in London. Whether she would have thought so before her marriage is

doubtful; but, as a matron, she afforded a fair instance of what Chalmers forcibly calls "the expulsive power of a new affection."

Those who occupy the front rank of the various walks of life, as well as the men and women who follow music and painting as a profession, live in an atmosphere of excitement. In comparison with these pursuits, all other sport is tame to them. The most successful are generally wearing themselves out, and become "old before their time." Circumstances, and indeed duty, may prevent some from over-taxing themselves; but how few there are who would have the resolution to abate one atom of a prosperous worldly career, though they half suspected it was killing them by inches! Fame is the very acme of excitement to the truly talented few; and, as the dram-drinker loves alcohol, they love it more than life itself.

The immoderate use of any of God's gifts in course of time destroys all pleasure in them, and a constant craving after excitement defeats its own end. Long ago I watched the downward course of a young nobleman, born to a princely inheritance, but whose chief aim was to spend it on personal gratification. When he was a boy at school, a day's trouting or a shot at the partridges gave the keenest pleasure. As he grew into a man, grouse and deer degraded the stubble-bird in his estimation, and only the nobler game of the hills and the heather could stimulate him to active exertion. He rented a deer-forest, and

for a few years deer-stalking and salmon-fishing contented him, at least for the autumn months. Among the last of his northern trips, his attendant told me that, in fishing down a salmon-stream alive with fish, he finished a quart-bottle of the best whisky; thus proving, that on him the excitement of the finest sport in the world had lost half its power, and needed the supplement of a stimulus more potent still. The northern mountains and rivers soon lost their charm; he completed a course of the grossest dissipation by dying in a lunatic asylum.

If possible, a still more melancholy race was run by a Highland chieftain. He was what is called "a favourite of fortune." With excellent talents, and heir to grand sporting estates, he had also wonderful aptitude for all manly recreations, and was considered an expert in most of them. For a time the northern summer and autumn sporting season, with its grouse, salmon, and deer, was his heart's delight; while the hunting-field in the "Shires" supplied uninterrupted winter excitement, without which life would have been a burden. On a Twelfth of August he sometimes never went to bed at all, in order to be on the ground by the first streak of the dawn; and in winter never missed "a meet" if he could help it. The natural consequence followed: active sports palled—he took to gambling and horse-racing to supply their place—was completely ruined, and died in his prime a confirmed sot.

Washington Irving's books on the Rocky Mountain and prairie hunting-grounds, as well as the too graphic reports by others of African desert slaughter and Cuban forest life, would fire the spirit of any young man with a taste for the gun or rifle. Apart, however, from the often useless, objectless cruelty, such hunting may be called the intemperance of sport; and, like all over-indulgence, a few expeditions would most likely end in surfeit or even disgust. Although the genius and good taste of the accomplished American have saved his hunting records from the charge of savage coarseness, the harrowing details of those less highly gifted have convinced many a man of pluck, and with endurance to face any dangers or hardships, that the novelty and intense interest of the whole would scarcely compensate for its sickening butchery.

Young men may take the word of a veteran in all British sports, that it is neither their quality nor their variety that affords the greatest amount of permanent pleasure or satisfaction, but the temperate use of them as recreations—not as the business of life. When kept under proper control they become the means of cheating the body into that amount of labour so necessary to preserve a sound and healthy constitution of the mind. Many a brilliant statesman, many an ardent student, many a careworn merchant, many a hard-wrought man of business, would certainly have lasted longer, and perhaps done better

work, had he not unjustly overloaded the poor mind with the whole toil which the body was destined to share, and thus done unconsciously what in him lay to wear out the one and emasculate the other.

In commending out-of-door sports as a means of insuring exercise to many who, without such stimulus, could not be enticed to undergo the fatigue requisite to keep mind and body in full strength and power, I shall be met with the objection, "How few of us have either the means or opportunity to take advantage of them!" I have known numbers in my day who sheltered themselves under this plea, and yet had little right to put it forward.

If we suppose that sport cannot be enjoyed unless with all its aristocratic adjuncts, it is a false, though very common, idea. The hard-worked citizen of the borough town perched upon a rocky coast, the resort of rare and various sea-birds, is often the last man you would expect to encounter with his duck-gun, although *you* had perhaps travelled a long distance for the chance of adding a few specimens to your collection, and, if once successful, deemed both time and trouble amply repaid.

Another busy and useful man has *his* lot cast in an inland city, the adjoining sand-hills of which swarm with rabbits. He has only to ask a day over them with his gun; perhaps even the shooting right may belong to the town of which he is chief magistrate, and yet he would think it a nuisance to

accompany the friend to whom he had kindly granted a day's sport.

I was well acquainted with an excellent and conscientious Writer to the Signet who possessed some very fair Lowland shooting. He made me welcome to a day on the stubbles whenever I chose; but on my suggesting that he should change his Saturday afternoon walk (the only exercise he allowed himself) for a day at the partridges, he was simply amused at the novelty of carrying a gun. A few years later, however, his health gave way, when he regretfully remarked, "The want of walking all my life is telling on me at last." He was a florid man, the very picture of health only a short time before, and died when scarcely past middle life.

It is, likewise, often the want of will rather than of opportunity which hinders many a sedentary pen-and-ink devotee from a healthful fishing-day on loch or river, which might have been the means of prolonging a valuable and useful life. Do not therefore despise "small sports," but enjoy them to the full during the hours you can conveniently spare. When so used, field-sports, by promoting health of body and relaxation of mind, are a blessing given us by the Almighty; and it is only if we crave after, and allow them to engross us, that they become hurtful. When tempted to exaggerated views of the sport beyond your reach, let your mind's eye turn to the Lowland peer or the mountain chief; for depend on it, they

would have been happier men, had not the love of excitement enticed them from pleasure to pleasure, till selfish amusement swallowed up, or at least deadened, all other love—nay, even the love of God and man—in their hearts.

My first impression of the rifle movement was, that we should become a nation of sportsmen-poachers; but never was there a greater mistake. That love of excitement which the pursuit of game so fully gratifies, was all expended at the butts; and the hopes of Wimbledon and other prizes spoilt many an embryo poacher, by making him grudge all spare time not devoted to target-practice. Most of our young men of good eye and steady hand began to shoot with ball, and became proficients at the target-ranges before trying the fowling-piece; and it is well known to thorough sportsmen, that nothing hinders a man from becoming a first-class or even a good game-shot, so much as ball-shooting at a mark. When a *trained* game-shot takes to the target with ball it is very different: but even he, after a long course with a rifle, will find his performance with a shot-gun considerably marred; and on resuming his fowling-piece, it may be some time ere he can bring down swift-flying birds in his former brilliant style. Smart pigeon-shots are therefore very unwilling to spoil their execution by using a rifle at all.[1] Hawker

[1] My youngest son was secretary to the Gateacre Gun Club for some time, and was also a member of the other Liverpool pigeon club.

says, "Many of the best performers at the pigeon-trap are scarcely third-rate shots at other birds." I think he has not stated the case fairly. A first-class pigeon-shot who had never practised much at game, may be only third-class on the moor or in the field. But had he given as much time to game as to pigeons, there is no doubt he would have been a first-rate sporting-shot. It is the reverse, however, with many a man who is reckoned a good shot at partridge or grouse. If he has modelled himself upon "slow and sure," and plumes himself on being a "*never miss*" shooter, he will seldom do anything very brilliant in the field—certainly never excel at the pigeon-trap. I must be careful, however, to guard against being thought in the slightest degree to disparage rifle-shooting.[1] I simply mean that excellence in shooting is very rarely attained with both the gun and the rifle;

He, and the brother next to him, threw over target-practice completely for the pigeon-trap, winning a number of cups, the contenders being seldom fewer than twenty or thirty. The brothers divided on several occasions. My Henry gun was one of their favourite weapons, their handicap distances rising to thirty-one and thirty-three yards respectively. A sweepstakes was won at the latter distance by the Henry gun. Both of these clubs shot under the rules of Hurlingham.

[1] Although my eldest son gained the Duke of Cambridge's Prize at Wimbledon, when he joined the 4th Dragoon Guards as cornet, and took afterwards a number of good prizes there and in the provinces, *he never practised at all*, except for a short time after leaving Hythe, and before the first time he went to Wimbledon. This want of ball-practice has, it seems to me, prevented his going back in double shooting at game. The first time he ever shot in a pigeon-match, he gained both the handicap and the twenty-five yards sweepstakes on the same day, at Dublin.

and I further assert, that even the greatest skill at the butts does not insure success in the forest.

Scrope, in his 'Days of Deer-stalking,' relates a case in point. A Highland laird wishing to secure the best ball-shot for his forest that could be procured, made a discharged sergeant of the Rifle Brigade his head-forester. This man as a rifle-shot had distanced all his comrades. At the end of the first year, however, he threw up his situation as forester in disgust, having only been able to bring down one yearling hart the whole season. No doubt, his being "green" to stalking was a disadvantage; but he had detected a better reason for his failure—namely, that shooting coolly at a mark was a very different affair from killing deer on a hillside. Many thousands there are, no doubt, who enjoy their evening drill and Saturday's ball-practice, who, either from disinclination or the nature of their employment, are precluded from sport on the moor and in the covert, on the shore or the sand-hill: to these the Volunteer movement must prove a real blessing, supplying, as it does, their only inducement to take needful exercise, and removing the temptation of the public-house and the billiard-room; and heartily do I rejoice to think how the time and energy so generously devoted to the service of their country react on the individuals themselves in increased strength and prolonged vigour.

Few of our modern poets had any enthusiasm for

field-sport or sportsmen. Cowper hated both. The Lake poets, in spite of their jubilant admiration of nature in all its wilder freaks and aspects, simply ignored them. The burden of Burns's lays was love and wine, or cottage life with all its simple cares and pleasures. Byron, notwithstanding his intense love of adventure and his passion for the ocean and its perils, was no sportsman. His heroes were bloodthirsty, reckless fiends, whom none but the first genius of his age could have invested with such absorbing interest. Callous to all emotions but those which the Devil uses most to effect his worst purposes, their creed may be summed up in the burning words of "the Giaour:"—

> "I laugh at laurels lost or won;
> But show me aught that I deem a worthy prize—
> The maid I love, the man I hate."

Is not this an awful *exposé* of the human mind? And if frail man for his sins is ever thus permitted to strip himself of all interest in life but the gross passions of sensuality and revenge, let us daily thank God if He has given us less deadly stimulants—nay, even for what are conventionally called the sports and pastimes of the world.

We may almost despise ourselves for admiring the dark halo with which poets have encircled those stormy spirits who "won't stoop in dire extremity," but it is often the gentlest natures who love them

best. When Miss Mitford frankly acknowledged that she could not help being fascinated by Milton's Satan, and heartily despised Virgil's ridiculous "pious Æneas," I have no doubt she spoke the mind of most intelligent and spirited young ladies who have read Milton and Virgil. For my own part, I always regarded the piety of Æneas as a transparent sham, and had little sympathy with the sneaking Trojans, heartily wishing a smart flogging to the country booby who, being fairly bamboozled in translating Homer's death of Hector, sheltered his Greekless head under a flood of tears. When asked "what was the matter" by the solemn Professor, he blubbered out, "I'm wae for Hector!" As an alumnus in Dunbar's class, I remember feeling grateful to Achilles for avenging the death of Patroclus by his encounter with Hector, being sure that the warrior who was only brave before those he felt pretty certain of overcoming, and who owned that he "exceedingly feared and quaked for the swift-footed son of Peleus," was a bully, and that the word "Hectoring," or bullying, had its origin and descent from the son of the King of Troy.

To go on with the poets. What could we expect from that little green linnet Moore but the love-witchery which enchanted the nation? He spent the most of his trifling life singing his delicious lyrics in the London *salons*, leaving poor Bessie, without a pang, to pine in solitude, penury, and neglect.

Longfellow, if not a sportsman, deserved to be one, for his exquisite ode on "The Indian Hunter;" and Christopher North dearly loved fishing sport, and celebrated its praises too. His eloquent and nervous style of writing had the true sporting ring in it; and when Christopher was "in his sporting-jacket," with fishing-rod in hand, a more imposing figure never graced the lochs and streams where he delighted to roam. I attended his first course of lectures as Professor of Moral Philosophy, and both to see and hear him was no ordinary treat.

Campbell and Rogers were men of a very different stamp from Wilson; for neither, by anticipation or in the retrospect, in "The Pleasures of Hope" or in "The Pleasures of Memory," had a word of encouragement for the sportsman, or any sympathy with his pleasures.

The Ettrick Shepherd was fond of his fishing-rod and gun, and practised shooting and fishing after his own rough fashion; but great Sir Walter was the sportsman's stanchest, truest friend. Throughout his unrivalled poetry, those noble lifelike specimens of mankind which he alone could produce, were almost invariably lovers of the chase. The opening stanzas of 'The Lady of the Lake,'—namely "The Stag-hunt"—are the most true to nature of anything ever written, and no follower of the deer or of the roe can read them without wonder and delight.

In his immortal prose the author's passion for man-

[illegible] and he has taken [illegible] heroes, and some [illegible] his own chivalrous delight [illegible] the hills, and the heather. [illegible] the Abbotsford Hunt [illegible] The [illegible] father of literature [illegible] to be set free from Lady [illegible] his charger. The contem- [illegible] ardour for the chase— [illegible] Humphry [illegible] up when the [illegible] Scott himself the [illegible] Then the inimitable [illegible] and hare-soup, [illegible] mutton, Tweed [illegible] of whisky-toddy, [illegible] Scott's character- [illegible] English guests, [illegible] the ecstasy of the Scotch farmers—forming a [illegible] of racy humour which could not be surpassed [illegible] Hogarth ever drew.

When we see those eminent men enjoying out-of- [illegible] recreations with as great zest as lads in their [illegible] though all of them were past their meridian, [illegible] at least in extreme old age, we are led to [illegible] them with the chieftain and peer before al- [illegible] to; and the cause why the old men kept their [illegible] life green, while the young ones had forced [illegible] into premature decay, is obvious enough. The [illegible] had surfeited themselves with excitement, re-

quiring stronger and stronger stimulants, until the exhausted frame could bear no more and succumbed; while the former, using sport as recreation, strengthened themselves for those mighty mental efforts which left a mark on their day and generation.

Whether or not sport is indigenous to the soil of the British Isles, it is certain that its practice as a highly honourable pursuit dates from a very early period, probably from the heroic or prehistoric ages. That the chase and capture of wild animals have been the occupation of a *class* in all ages, and in almost all countries, is undoubtedly the case; but I firmly believe that the love of field-sports has been the national characteristic of no other people so much as of our own. When it became so, I do not know. It may have belonged to the ancient Briton, as I am inclined to think, and have taken still deeper root with the advent of those Vikings, or sea-kings, whose feats of daring formed the theme of so many legends and ballads, and the traditions of whose wild exploits are remembered to this day.

In the royal forests, such as Epping and the New Forest, reserved for centuries for the sport of the king and his nobles, we are reminded of the esteem in which our ancestors held the chase—hawking and hunting in the olden time being the pastimes of the great, just as at present hunting, shooting, and fishing are of most of us, from the noble to the peasant, who have the means of enjoying them; and all were then,

as they are now, proud of pre-eminence as sportsmen. This love of sport, bred in us for ages, has become quite inseparable from us—is, in truth, part of our very selves; so much so, indeed, that the British colony may be detected at a glance, by the introduction of such sports as are suitable to the circumstances of the adopted home. Look at Canada, at Nova Scotia: there, in addition to small-game shooting and salmon-fishing as in the Old Country, the moose is tracked through the snow, till, after days and nights of toil, the hardships not only endured but enjoyed, the hunter comes up with his huge quarry, and his triumph is complete.

In Australia the kangaroo is hunted by a pack of large dogs, somewhat like our deer-hound; that rough country strewn with the trunks of prostrate trees, which must be cleared by the daring riders—obstacles requiring all their nerve and horsemanship to face.

In India, the wild elephant crashing through the virgin forest, the tiger crouching in the jungle, the panther or leopard concealed on the leafy branch, the bristling wild hog started from the brake, or the bear shambling along the mountain-side—all tempt the adventurous spirit of our countrymen; and many a gallant officer has been laid low by these formidable foes.

At the Cape, too, the sturdy colonist will often travel far up-country in quest of the lion, the elephant, the rhinoceros, scorning the danger, and

burning to engage in the mortal combat—the very uncertainty of the issue swelling within him the irrepressible instinct of excitement.

Probably this prevailing spirit of sport through all our classes was most nearly approached by the ancient Greeks at their Olympic games, where, as in our hunting-fields, all classes met on equal terms in friendly contest. These games were established among them by leaders whose rare prescience foresaw the advantage of early training and personal emulation in those accomplishments, which are most useful to the soldiers of a people who were almost constantly engaged in war. Let us now, therefore, take into consideration the effect of this sporting element of our constitution on the *physique* of our own nation.

It is not to be denied that a keen appreciation of toilsome out-of-door sports and pastimes has made the sturdy race they are out of British islanders, and that the young aristocrats who have the most means and opportunity for enjoying them are the finest young fellows in Europe. Our veteran generals have often been heard to assert: "It is all very well to have crammed-up successful competitors of military schools for parades and peace campaigns; but for active service in time of war, for the far look-out and quick appreciation of the advantages to be seized by every diversity of country, give me the Nimrods of the chase, or the swift-footed and keen-eyed deathsmen of the grouse and the deer."

What was it in time of war that made our young Guardsmen careless of hardship and examples of endurance to the soldiers under them, but that when sport was changed into earnest, they put in practice in the dread reality of war those lessons they had learned in their mimic campaigns with the beasts and birds of their dear native land?

> "The chase I follow from afar,
> 'Tis mimicry of noble war."

So says "The Douglas;" and many a high-spirited son of Albyn, after a long and weary day on the hills, will cordially endorse the sentiment.

Nor must we omit a word on our venturesome sportsmen of the ocean—those stalwart fishermen who so often brave death in pursuit of their dangerous calling. In every coast-hamlet those noble forms with resolute sunburnt faces, cased in their peculiar fishing-garb, attract the notice and admiration of the wayfarer, and a feeling of confidence and pride gladdens his heart, well knowing that the pick and cream of these splendid types of humanity form the rough material which has made the British navy the envy and the dread of the world.

This passion for the chase and for adventure by sea and land having been transmitted from father to son through many generations, has, I am convinced, had the effect of strengthening in the highest degree our national constitution. I believe that it has done

more, and that we owe the courage and endurance of our character to the same cause.

A good example of the result of careful breeding is to be seen in the case of the horse. It is well known that the bone of the race-horse is much closer and stronger in proportion to its size than that of the cart-horse; the quality of the muscles, too, is much finer, the whole animal being formed for strength combined with lightness; while the courage of the thoroughbred is proverbial. No one, I presume, would venture to assert that a cart-foal could be turned into a racer by mere training; yet originally, I have no doubt, all classes of horse sprang from the same stock.

So far, then, I am prepared to go with the doctrine of "natural selection"—namely, that it can produce variations or differences *in degree;* but I see no argument from it, nor from the archæological and ethnological researches of Sir John Lubbock and others, for disbelief of the Bible history of the creation; nor that, if discredited, Sir William Thomson's theory of evolution in the slightest degree removes the necessity of a first "Prime Cause"—in other words, of a Creator.

The ethnological facts cited regarding savage tribes are, to my mind at least, as capable of explanation on the theory of their degradation from a superior type, as by their elevation from a lower; while it appears to me that the agency of the Creator is as requisite to give the power to work by natural laws to the supposed original cell, as it is to bring forth a perfect

result of the natural law, and not as the punishment for infringing it.

"If, then, we sedulously inquire, in each particular instance, into the *cause* of the sickness, pain, and premature death, or derangement of the corporeal frame in youth and middle life, which we see so common around us, and endeavour to discover whether it originated in obedience to the physical and organic laws, or sprang from infringement of them, we shall be able to form some estimate as to how far bodily suffering is justly attributable to imperfections of nature, and how far to our own ignorance and neglect of divine institutions."

As I do not myself profess to do more than observe, certainly not to analyse, what is going on around me, it is as interesting to me to learn the result of those who trace the *manner* in which different exercises affect our organs, as it is gratifying to be corroborated by them.

Among the many charming shooting-quarters it has been my happiness to live at, the lodges of several were built on the banks of our romantic Highland sea-lochs, full of the smaller varieties of white fish, and also much frequented by the larger kinds, especially when the herring "skull" returned from their migration. As soon as the screaming of gulls and the dull thud of the solan's dive proclaimed the advent of the moving mass of herring, every clachan, shieling, and even hut, along the base of hills girdling the loch,

was rife with bustle and preparation. Nets were spread out, lines prepared for baiting, and every skiff and coble launched that dared be trusted to keep above water, even in a landlocked sea.

My first effort was to procure herring sufficient to bait three hundred hooks; and directly the baited line was packed neatly in its creel, we rowed to the fishing-banks. The line, when sunk, was allowed exactly one hour before beginning to haul it; and if you had hit on a shoal of fish, the excitement of lifting a long line could scarcely be surpassed. Down in the depths you are warned by a heavy struggle to be careful in your "draw." Two-pounders, three-pounders, and even fish of six or seven pounds, successively emerge from the abyss, and are gaffed by your henchman; but still the monster to come gives ample proof that these goodly fish are but weaklings when pitted against him. At last, his enormous outline is dimly seen deep, deep down; and with increasing caution you bring to the surface a thirty-pound cod or ling. A fair show of weighty fish is likely to be secured ere the last hook is raised, when, with quiet satisfaction, you find the coble loaded with some great and many fair-sized denizens of the deep—cod, ling, gurnet, skate, plaice, haddock, and mighty conger-eels.

At low tide these lochs are particularly adapted for the sea-fly, and an invalid sitting snugly in his two-oared boat, refreshed by the summer breeze, may

bring in numbers of lythe, the bigger ones affording fine play. The whiting-beds also are pleasing hand-line amusement on a June or July evening. When in good take, whiting seize the bait as soon as the lead touches the ground; but there is considerable knack in hooking and bringing them into the boat. Unless you strike the instant you feel the quiver of the fish when taking the bait, and pull up steadily without jerking, there is every chance that it may slip off, either when it first seizes the hook or on its passage to the surface. I have always noticed that ladies, from their finer touch, are the greatest adepts at this branch of fishing sport.

The late Sir William Murray, of Ochtertyre, preferred deep-sea fishing to all other varieties of sport. He had his four trained men, who were allowed the day to themselves, and the best food that could be procured; but he sternly exacted their services during the long, mid-winter, dreary nights.

When darkness set in, with lamp in hand, he roused his crew, and pulled or sailed for the deep-water fishing-banks, about eight miles distant, where the long lines were "shot." Some skins of the leviathans he landed are still preserved in Bute; and I well remember his exciting and graphic account of a captured skate two hundred pounds in weight! He was two hours in moving the flat monster from the ground, to which it had glued itself, his boatmen all the time assuring him it was only "a fast;" but he

kept firm to his own opinion, and was rewarded at last by a yielding and shaking movement, which caused "his heart to leap into his mouth." By careful play, the ponderous creature was raised, and tired sufficiently to follow the boat. As soon as it was coaxed into shallow water, by the help of several long gaffs it was trailed high and dry upon the sandy beach.

About the gloaming of the 28th of September 1874, a message was sent to me from my friends James and Robert Turner, fishermen of the Solway, that they had captured a fish "the like o' which they had never seen afore; and they would feel mickle obleeged if I would step doun and tell them its name." They would have fetched it up, they added, but its weight was an insuperable obstacle.

As their fishing-station was only a quarter of a mile distant, I was soon alongside of the monster, which proved to be a small specimen of the basking shark, nine and a half feet long, with three tiers of teeth—the front row, as in all sharks, being mobile. This shark, I believe, is the only non-voracious species, feeding chiefly on marine plants and small fish, and it attains the enormous length of forty feet. It is distinguished easily by the small size of the teeth.

There are often rare and curious fish taken both with net and line by our fishermen; and their life, if full of peril, has abundance of excitement too.

I have now endeavoured to show, first, that all

the world's a hunting-field, and all men and women hunters and huntresses in it, the quarry being that pleasurable emotion caused by raised spirits—in other words, excitement. Next, that over-indulgence in this state of mind, even in sacred things, is pernicious, and, if persevered in, will naturally end in satiety and weariness. Lastly, that this element of our nature was given us for wise and beneficent purposes, and, if not misused, may often cheer and refresh us when worn by the carking cares of life. Let us be careful, then, not to turn the blessing into a curse by the immoderate use of it, and then we may be daily grateful to our Creator, even for that often much-abused pastime called "Sport."

DEER-STALKING.

THIS first of British sports can only be enjoyed by the few Highland proprietors who still maintain their forests, and those to whom their permission is extended. Still, if the many keen sportsmen who are panting to try their rifles upon a gallant stag were thoroughly entered at deer-stalking, they might find less cause to regret their privation than they now imagine. In the first place, no sport is more ruled by the weather; again, one is so dependent on the skill and tact of the stalker, in whose hands, for some time at least, you must be content to act like a mere puppet. And when the deer are driven, a single false move, or the mistaking of a signal by the hill-men employed, may spoil all. In every other kind of shooting the sportsman ought to trust to his own resources and foresight; but in deer-stalking, unless he has passed his life in the forest, and is thoroughly acquainted with every corrie, crag, and knoll, he had much better trust

to those who are. Without this knowledge, it is impossible for any one to tell how the wind will blow upon a given point: sometimes it may be north on one side of a hollow and south on the other; and I have seen the mist moving slowly in one direction along the hillside, and half an hour afterwards the very reverse, without any change in the wind. To account for this on the spur of the moment would often puzzle the scientific; but the unlettered hill-man, who has only been taught by the rough experience of the crag and the blast, though unable to talk theoretically on the subject, yet, from constant and acute observation, will confidently predict the result; and, taking advantage of every shifting change, will bring you within fair rifle-distance of the unsuspecting herd.

To a novice, even though an expert rifle-shot, the first sight of "the antlered monarch of the waste" will almost take away the power of hitting him. But to any one accustomed to the sport and constantly practising it, the sameness abates somewhat of its intense interest: for it admits of no variety but the age and dimensions of the stag. In wild-fowl shooting, the excitement is kept alive by the various kinds of game that present themselves, from the magnificent hooper to the tiny teal. On the grouse-mountains there is often the uncertainty whether the next point may be the red, or the "jetty, heath-cock," or whether a twiddling snipe may spring, or an Alpine hare start unexpectedly before you. It is the same uncertainty

which gives zest to cover-shooting. The golden-breasted pheasant, the russet woodcock, the skulking hare or dodging coney, may all successively appear.

I do not mean by the above remarks to depreciate deer-stalking. It is sport for princes. I only offer them as consolation to those who undervalue the amusement within their reach, by exaggerated ideas of that above it.

No man with good nerves need despair of becoming a tolerable rifle-shot, as the great art is to take plenty of time; in fact, to shoot as coolly at a deer as at the target. The American backwoodsmen with their ill-balanced rifles can hit the jugular vein of an animal feeding or moving about, with unerring accuracy, at thirty or forty yards. Every one must see how much this depends upon nerve and coolness; and these settlers are taught self-command, which is the basis of their dexterity, from their earliest years. I recollect being shown, by the owner, a rifle which he considered a *chef-d'œuvre* of American workmanship. The most cool-headed forester of our country would have been puzzled to do much execution with it at first. It looked and felt exactly like a toy, with its peaked and silver-mounted toe and heel-plate, long unbalanced barrel, and ludicrously small bore. Our rifles, on the contrary, are beautifully poised, and their weight enables us to take a much steadier aim at a long distance; while the ball, from being much larger, is less affected by the wind. I daresay, however, if

[illegible] American wood-ranger, [illegible] way, were fairly [illegible] sovereign contempt for [illegible]

[illegible] served that the performers [illegible] with the rifle are what are [illegible] shots;" for although the first-rate hand [illegible] may often bring down the deer [illegible] style, yet upon any unexpected [illegible] itself, he is apt to fire too [illegible] style of shooting which [illegible] the slow man, however [illegible] himself time for deliberate [illegible] been practising much at [illegible] will, unless quite on [illegible] until [illegible] swifts [illegible] while his father [illegible] have given, could [illegible] missed a rifle-shot [illegible] generally accompanied [illegible] and whose shooting [illegible] not left-handed [illegible] the

a Highland deer-stalker and an American
both finished adepts in their own way
matched, each would have a sovereign
the dexterity of the other.

I have constantly observed that th
most to be depended on with the rifle
called "poking shots;" for although the fi
with the fowling-piece may often bring d
running in admirable style, yet upon any
fair chance presenting itself, he is apt
quick, forgetting the different style of sho
is required for a rifle; while the slow m
taken unawares, always gives himself time f
aim. Any one, also, who has been practis
snipe, or other quick shooting, will, unl
his guard, be almost certain to miss the
his hand is brought in; after which, wh
returns to the snipe, they will stand a be
of escape, from the poking manner in wh
at first be inclined to fire at them. As
member being much perplexed to see a
miss a fair shot at a deer, when a few da
had killed seven swifts out of eight fly
"full bat;" while his father, the old for
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A Relic of the Clan Colquhoun,

Drawn from Life.

With his trusty flint-locked long barrelled rifle of the last century.

left shoulder, being unable to close his left eye, and was as slow a performer as ever pulled a trigger. Flying shots he invariably missed, and, at last, seldom fired at; but ground game, except rabbits, had no chance with him. Nothing could flurry or put him out of his shooting. If the shot was not intercepted, and he was only allowed plenty of time, it was certain death.

I had twice an opportunity of seeing these three men fairly tested with the rifle. Some deer being discovered near the top of a high hill, it was arranged, as all their passes were well known, to drive them with some shepherds and their collies. My brother and I begged hard to join the party, and were placed under charge of the gamekeeper, whose pass was one of the best. Before starting, however, the left-shouldered man wished to fire off an old load, being afraid to risk it at the deer. It was suggested that he should shoot at a hare. We had not gone far when one rose about forty yards off. Even now I think I see the cool way in which he raised his rifle, and, allowing poor puss a free stretch of thirty yards, fired. The hare dropped dead, and, when we went up, she was fairly struck between the shoulders. After a time we were safe in our passes, and the driving-party commenced their manœuvres. We soon heard the yelp of the dogs, and, shortly after, the floundering of a deer in some mossy ground immediately above the pass. Presently it made its appearance, crossing us at about

sixty yards' distance. It was a beautiful chance. Taking deliberate aim, the gamekeeper fired. To our astonishment and chagrin, the deer, which had been moving slowly along, bounded forward, frightened enough, but unhurt. No other chance was obtained till near the end of the day, when the old forester fired a tremendously long shot, and struck the deer, which ran for a few hundred yards, and then dropped.

Another time, when the deer had taken the water, there was a general scramble to the shore. A boat was quickly procured, which the cunning animal no sooner saw bearing down than it turned short round, and was within a few yards of grounding, when the three aforesaid stalkers were ready to fire within fair distance. The left-shouldered man took deliberate aim at the head, the only part above water, and cut off the horns close to the skull. The deer now struck ground, and when bounding along the shore was missed by the gamekeeper, but immediately brought down in admirable style by his old father. That a man could miss a deer, and yet knock down double shots one after another at game, used to appear a complete problem to me; especially as one of his rivals could not hit a bird at all, and his father as a game-shot was not to be named in the same day with him. After a little practice myself, the solution was plain. I have seen this old man in his *eightieth year* bring down a deer *running*, and one season had some venison sent me, killed by him, when ninety-one years old!!

As I consider this forester the finest specimen I ever met with of a Highlander of the old school, I may perhaps be allowed to mention some of his peculiarities apart from his professional avocations. His words, like his shooting, were slow, but sure to tell. When addressing his superiors, his manner was marked by the greatest courtesy, without the least approach to servility. He was well read in ancient history, knew all about the siege of Troy, and talked with the greatest interest of Hannibal's passage over the Alps. On one occasion, when several gentlemen were talking on a disputed point of history, he stepped forward, begged pardon for interrupting them, and cleared it up to their utter amazement. His memory was excellent, and nothing gave him greater delight than old traditions, legends, &c. The last time I saw him, he gave us an account of some of the Roman Catholic bishops of Scotland, with characteristic anecdotes. In politics he had his own peculiar opinions, was particularly jealous of the encroachments of the "Great Bear," as he called Russia, and thought the Allies committed an irreparable error in not partitioning France after the battle of Waterloo. No present found greater favour than the last newspaper; and it was curious to see the old man devouring its contents without spectacles. He would not have been a true Highlander had he not been a firm believer in all their superstitions. Two instances of second-sight he related to me as having happened to himself; although he was very

unwilling to talk upon the subject, and I have often noticed his evasive replies to those who questioned him. I premise my account by saying, that wherever he was known, his word was never doubted, and I would have believed it as implicitly as that of the proudest peer in the realm. One day, when returning very tired from some sporting expedition, he met an acquaintance, accompanied by a young man whom he also perfectly well knew. The first stopped to ask "what sport?" He gave a short answer over his shoulder, and saw the young man walk on. That afternoon he heard he had been killed by a fall from his cart, at the very time of this *rencontre*. Upon questioning his companion the next day, he said there was no person with him. The other instance happened one rainy evening when looking over his kennel. He saw a man with a graip cleaning out the gutter, and called to know who had desired him to do so. The gutter-cleaner walked slowly towards him; but something having arrested his attention in the meantime, he lost sight of him, and could not make out how he had disappeared. Upon inquiring of the overseer, he said this man was unwell and confined to bed. He shortly afterwards recovered, which was sufficient confirmation to the old forester of the truth of his vision; for in all cases of second-sight, where the object approaches, it is a sure sign of recovery, and when it recedes, of death. Another of his prejudices was the lucky or unlucky "first foot."

Half the people of the country were one or the other with him. There was a canty old carle of a herd whose happy cheerful face was enough to banish care from every other brow: but the old forester had unfortunately met him on the morning of some unlucky day. Now, as it happened that this conscientious old herd—whose boast it was, "I never did ahint ma maister's back what I wadna do afore his face"—was generally one of the earliest astir, he was oftener the "first foot" than any other body; and as he came, crooning some old Gaelic song, with his staff over his shoulder, and gave his blithe salutation, "Goot mornin', goot mornin'! goot sport, goot sport!" a stranger would wonder at the look of gloom which overshadowed the forester's face, and the scarcely articulate grunt which was his only reply, sometimes followed by the half-muttered exclamation, "Chock that body!" To shoot a wild swan was reckoned a most unlucky feat. One severe winter, when after water-fowl with another man, four hoopers were discovered close to the shore. His companion eagerly pointed them out; when the old forester, who had most likely seen them first, coolly replied, "You—see —John,—we'll—just let them alone!" The only thing not truly national about him was substituting a pinch of snuff for a quid of tobacco; and when out on the hills he has often expressed his belief, that the moss-water he was sometimes obliged to drink would

long ago have been the death of him, had he not always followed it up by the antidote of a pinch which "killed all the venom."

The 'Edinburgh Evening Courant' of May 27, 1843, has the following notice of the subject of these remarks; "Died, on Inch Lonaig, Loch Lomond, in the house in which he was born, nearly a century before, Robert Colquhoun. When seven years old he was taken into the service of Sir James and Lady Helen Colquhoun, and for the last few years of his life it used to be his proudest boast that he had served four of the chieftains of Colquhoun, his fealty descending unimpaired from sire to son. When the suns and snows of 70 years had rendered him less able for active duty, he requested to be allowed to end his days in the rugged and romantic island of his birth. Dear to the old Highlander's heart was this lone isle. Its rocks are shadowed by the finest yew-trees, which in ancient times supplied the country with bows—the loch around it is deeper and more blue. The island is also celebrated among the clan as having been the scene of an interview between the chief and Rob Roy, which ended in their being on the best terms ever after. The funeral of the old man, sublime in its very simplicity, was truly characteristic of himself. The little fleet of boats all abreast, keeping solemn time with their oars, on their way to the churchyard of the picturesque village of Luss, where, surrounded by the mountains he so often climbed,

quietly reposes this faithful servant of the chiefs of Colquhoun."

But the character of my old friend has beguiled me into too long a digression. I must now return to the rifle.

Every man before firing at deer must be thoroughly acquainted with his own piece—a point even more important with a rifle than a shot-gun. Under eighty yards it will most likely shoot a little high; and if the wind is at all strong, it will alter the direction of the ball fully a foot at a hundred yards, for which allowance must be made. The best place to hit a deer, unless he is lying down, and so close as to tempt one to try the head, is just behind the shoulder. If struck fair, he will most likely bound forward ten or twenty yards, and then drop. One that I shot ran fifty yards before it fell, although the lower part of the heart was touched. When this occurs, you may be sure it will never rise again. If, on the contrary, it falls instantaneously, unless shot through the head, neck, or spine, it may very possibly spring up on a sudden, and perhaps escape altogether. If struck too far back, a deer may sometimes run for half a day, and the wound has even been known to heal up, but is more likely to prove fatal the next day. When a deer is discovered lying down, in such a situation that he might dip out of sight the moment he rises, and only his horns are visible, the sportsman should advance with extreme caution until the deer hears him,

when he will most likely slowly raise and turn his head before springing up. Now is the time to shoot him between the eye and the ear.

The most propitious day for deer-stalking is a cloudy one with blinks of sunshine: exactly such as you would choose for fishing. When the sky is cloudless, and the sun very dazzling, the herd are apt to see you at a great distance, and take alarm. High and changing wind is always very bad, as it keeps them moving about in a wild and uneasy state. In such weather it is better, if possible, to wait till it settles a little, and take advantage of the first calm. If the breeze be light, they will not move much, but a strong steady wind lasting for some days will always make the deer change their ground, by facing it often for miles. Mist is the worst of all, as the deer are pretty sure to see *you* before *you* see *them*. Always advance on deer from above, as they are much less apt to look up than down a hill. If possible, have the sun at *your back* and in *their face*. With this advantage you may even venture to approach them from below. (Birds, on the contrary, always look up, and it is best to stalk *them* from lower ground.) If it is a quiet shot, and the sun is at your back, wait for a clear blink [1] before making your near approach. Of course every one knows that it is out of the question, *under any circumstances*, to attempt advancing

[1] Before fishing a sure salmon-cast, do just the reverse. *If possible*, wait for an obscuring cloud.

on deer unless the wind be favourable; so all other directions are subject to this.

In corries and hollows it is quite impossible to know how the wind will blow upon a particular point, *unless you have marked every change of wind upon every point of the corrie.*

In high wind, deer are always difficult to drive. Should they make a *pause*, they will in all likelihood turn in the face of a hundred men, and not suffer themselves to be driven further. As the wind becomes stronger the higher you ascend, the deer on the tops of the hills are most difficult to drive. The lowest ground is always the best for *driving* on a windy day.

In south and west wind the deer are far more easily stalked, as the colder and sharper north and east keeps them always moving and beating against it. When fired at, they will go double the distance with an east or north wind.

Deer will go far more readily to the high passes in the morning, and to the low passes in the evening; so this ought always to be attended to.

Never stalk *between* two herds, if it can be helped; this is always considered bad stalking.

Ox-deer or "heaviers," as the foresters call them (most likely a corruption from the French *hiver*), are wilder than either hart or hind. They often take post upon a height that affords a look-out all round, which makes them very difficult to stalk. Although

not so good when December is past, still they are in season all the winter; hence their French designation. Yeld-hinds are also fit for the table till the end of January. The latter are easily distinguished by an experienced forester by their light colour. The ears of the "heaviers" are always cropped, that they may at once be known from the hinds. This deformity makes their hornless heads look perfectly hideous. When stags grow very old, their horns go back, just like a tree going to decay. Sometimes a stag, neither a rig nor a heavier, is hornless, and even "takes the rut."

The best time for a quiet stalking shot is either early in the morning or late in the evening, as the deer are not so much on the alert, and are busy feeding. It is at these times also that they are apt to come down from the high to the low ground.

Some forests are so crowded with hinds and calves that stalking between deer is often unavoidable: this is the most difficult of all stalks. You have to keep a look-out upon the deer on each side, as well as those in the middle, which you are advancing on. Should those on either side catch sight of the sportsman, or get his wind, he may still have his shot, *if there is any cover in front*, by *running* forward under shelter of it. Sometimes when the deer on both sides have taken the alarm, even should the ground be bare, those in the middle will stand staring, trying to discover what had frightened the others. Under these

circumstances, whenever the sportsman sees the deer on either side begin to move, his only chance of a shot is to *run on;* and perhaps the attention of the centre ones may be so fixed on their companions as to allow him to get within range. When the wind is *fair*, the best plan is to have *good patience* until the deer feed up, without attempting to stalk between them. When you have a side wind, however, it is very difficult to manage, especially with a train of men and dogs, to all of whom the stalker must give his signal at once, perhaps with only twenty yards of ground to come and go upon.

When stalking a herd, or between deer, *down hill*, the best way is to slide upon the back, with your feet foremost. This can be done by leaning upon the elbows, and using the heels of the shoes to draw on the body. The knees will thus be prevented from rising too high. Should you attempt to crawl down head foremost, the back will often be two feet higher than the head, and the stalker never be aware of it. In sliding down the hill, both stalker and sportsman must have their eye upon the deer; and, if they raise their heads, must keep the exact position they were in when the deer looked up. It is very bad generalship, either with deer or wild fowl, to clap down quickly, as they at once see this manœuvre. Instead of doing so, remain steady as a rock, until the deer begin to feed again, or look in a different direction. Should they suspect you, and thus render

it necessary to move out of sight, withdraw yourself *inch by inch*, so as to prevent their seeing the *least motion*. In stalking up hill, you must crawl sometimes upon hand and knee, occasionally flat upon your face when the deer come more prominently into view. As they always look down hill, greater caution is required than when stalking from above. Should two good stalkers be noticed by deer, one ought always to remain where they were first perceived, the other advancing alone. If the deer are in sight and not far off, a knowing forester often restrains the eagerness of the novice, by telling him to "coont the grass as they go along;" that is, to count the deer as they raise their heads for a moment when feeding up. This, by insuring a very slow advance, doubles the chances of their escaping the notice of the deer, and keeps the young stalker more cool. The forester all the time has his eye on the leading deer. When selecting your hart, raise the rifle most leisurely to the shoulder. If brought up in a hurry, or in the same way that a quick shot takes aim with his fowling-piece, you are almost certain to miss.

A good forester generally becomes very nervous in the long-run, from the bungling of some gentlemen and the ill-temper of others, together with his constant anxiety to procure them fair chances.

The quick sight of a skilful forester in first discovering deer will appear miraculous to a stranger to

the sport, and, unless quite bewildered, he cannot fail to admire the generalship which follows. The whole ground is as perfectly known to his guide as his own pleasure-grounds to himself. Every hollow, every knoll is taken advantage of; every shifting turn of the wind, up the one or round the other, is surely predicted, until to his own utter amazement, the panting Sassenach or Lowlander is told that he is within fair rifle-distance of a bevy of noble harts.

After deer have been stalked and shot at, they become much wilder; the best sport at the old harts is therefore obtained at the beginning of the season. They generally keep together, and when their stately mien and branching antlers are seen in the distance, the sight is enough to inspirit the most apathetic; but when he is told to cock his double-barrelled rifle for a shot, I could well excuse a novice for being scarcely able to obey. When there are hinds in the herd, they often present themselves between you and the unsuspecting harts; but even should they be at a distance, great caution is necessary, as, if one hind gets a glimpse of the crouching enemy, the whole herd, stags, and all, are sure to scamper away, amidst the bitter execrations of the forester upon its hornless head.

The next best time for a shot at a fine old stag, after they have become wild, is about the beginning of October, when each lot of hinds is sure to contain a good hart. The chances then may often not be so good, but from the stags being dispersed, there are

more of them. If deer are feeding forward, it requires very nice calculation, when at a distance, to know the point they will arrive at by the time you have neared them, especially as a shower of rain or a gust of wind will quicken their motions. But if the stalker is not far from the herd, which is feeding up to his place of concealment, with a favourable wind, he should not grudge waiting; for, by sending round drivers to windward of the deer, they are often apt to turn and face them. I cannot say that driving, under any circumstances, gives half the pleasure that stalking does; for my own part, I would rather kill one stalked hart than several driven. Driving, however, upon a large scale has a most imposing effect; and although it cannot be otherwise than injurious to a forest, yet the exhilarating nature of the whole proceedings, in which so many friends may join, often makes the proprietor overlook the consternation and panic it creates among the wild and timid herd. Some part of the forest is selected to which the deer are to be driven; a great number of hill-men and shepherds, who thoroughly understand what they are about, are then sent to the furthest extremity to bring all the deer they can collect to this spot: the passes, of course being well known, are occupied by the sportsmen with their rifles. The drivers, sometimes hallooing and sometimes giving their wind, gradually contract their circle; the deer are huddled together, and, finding the only clear ground in the direction of

the rifles, slowly and cautiously take their doomed way. There is often great difficulty in driving them, as they are always obliged to go with the wind, which their natural instinct of self-preservation makes them very unwilling to do; and if they possibly can, they always face it. When the herd come within distance of the rifles, great mischief often ensues; the nervous and indifferent shot firing into the centre of the living mass, while even the experienced deer-stalker, in singling out the stag-royal, may sometimes wound a couple of hinds beyond him.

So much for driving on grand occasions, which gives the shooter a tolerably snug sinecure until the game comes up to his hand. But when it is practised in a small way, there is no sport which more calls into play his pluck and endurance of fatigue. He first climbs to the ridge of the hill, where he is at once seen by the hawk-eyed driver who has taken his station near the foot, or on the opposite brow, and has marked with his glass every herd at feed or rest on the face below. As soon as he has selected one, he attempts to drive it up the hill, towards the sportsman, either by hallooing or showing himself; at the same time giving warning by the manner of his halloo which way they are likely to take. The sportsman must be thoroughly acquainted with all the passes, or have some person with him who is; and, running from one "snib" to another, in obedience to the signal below, catch sight of the horns of the herd, as, with

serpentine ascent, they wind their wary way. From the zigzag manner in which they often come up, it is very difficult to make sure which pass will be the favoured one, and I have been within a few hundred yards of the antlers when the prolonged shout from below has warned me that I had an almost perpendicular shoulder of the hill to breast at my utmost speed before I could hope to obtain the much-desired shot. If the wind is at all high, so determined are the deer to face it, that, unless there are a great number of drivers, one herd after another may take the wrong direction; but, if the day is favourable with only a light breeze, a knowing driver or two will generally manage to send them up to the rifle. When the deer have selected their pass, should you be within fair distance, with both barrels cocked, beware of making the slightest motion, *especially of the head*, until you mean to fire. Even when perfectly in view, if you lie flat and do not move, the herd are almost sure to pass. One or two hinds generally take the lead. The fine old harts, if there are any in the herd, often come next; but sometimes, if very fat and lazy, they lag in the rear. When the first few hinds have fairly passed, the rest are sure to follow, until their line is broken, and their motions are quickened, by a double volley from the rifle.

When stalking (September 1840) in Glenartney forest, by the kind permission of the noble owner, I had as fine a chance as man could wish spoiled by

the scarcely audible whimper of a dog. I was placed in a most advantageous spot, within near distance of the pass. Presently an old hind came picking her stately steps, like a lady of the old school ushering her company to the dining-room. Next her came a careless three-year-old hart, looking very anxious to get forward, and perfectly regardless of danger. All now was safe; I felt sure of my shot,—when, horror of horrors! a slight whimper was heard. The old hind listened, halted, and then turned short round upon the young hart, who instantly followed her example, and the whole herd ran helter-skelter down the hill. The unfortunate sound proceeded from one of the forester's two collies, the only dogs Lord Willoughby allows in the forest; they are kept for the purpose of bringing to bay any deer badly wounded, and are never slipped upon other occasions. The marplot above alluded to was an old dog, and very good for the purpose; he had winded without seeing the deer—hence his mistake.

Glenartney is a beautiful little forest, walled round by fine green hills; but the deer being too numerous for its extent, are rather small. It also stands high, and is not so well sheltered as might be desired—on which account the deer, when the winter storm sets in severely, although fed to the full, cannot remain to eat their food, and are obliged to seek the shelter of the woods for many miles round, far beyond their bounds. At night they wander to the turnip-fields

for sustenance, where numbers are shot by poachers, who watch the gates and openings into the fields. One man boasted to me that he had in that manner killed six during one storm, with a common fowling-piece loaded with ball. The turnip-field where he performed this feat was more than twelve miles from the forest.

Perhaps as fine deer as any in the kingdom are those of the Black Mount. The cup [1] on the top of the horns of many, according to Highland phrase, would hold a gill of whisky; and yet there are heads now preserved in Taymouth Castle, which show that their forefathers, though fewer in number, were even greater than they. The Black Mount is twenty-one miles long by twelve broad; and the Marquis of Breadalbane, notwithstanding his numerous engagements in public life, has not neglected this noble appanage of a Highland proprietor. No expense or trouble is spared which can contribute to the winter subsistence of the deer, or protect them from poachers. Patches of different kinds of food are sown in the valleys, and left uncut, to which they flock during the severity of winter. The forest has plenty of green summer food, and abundance of long heather, which affords shelter in cold weather, and is greedily eaten in the snowstorm, when hardly any other food can be reached. I shot the subject of the woodcut

[1] The three top prongs of the horn, growing out together, form a cup. There is no cup at all except in the finest and oldest stags.

there about the beginning of October 1840, when the forest was in all its glory, and nothing but sounds of rivalry and defiance were heard in every quarter. The head is not by any means the largest size, but may be taken as a fair average specimen. The fallow deer's head was from life, one of the finest I ever saw.

The day I shot the red deer was perhaps the most unpropitious for stalking which could possibly have been chosen. In the morning, the mist was rolling lazily along the sides of the mountains in dense masses, and it was evident there would be rain before the close of the day. It was enough to damp the heart of the most ardent deer-stalker, but I determined (having little time to spare) to abide by the forester's opinion. His answer was, that "we would just do our best; but if we were unsuccessful to-day, I must e'en wait for to-morrow." With this determination we started for the forest, followed by an under-keeper, with one of Lord Breadalbane's fine deer-hounds led in a leash. A slight breeze at first sprang up, and partially cleared away the mist from some of the lower hills. The quick eye of Robertson immediately discovered a deer lying down upon the ridge of one of them. His glass was instantly fixed. "There, sir, if you could manage that fellow, you would have one of the finest harts in the forest." "Well, suppose we go round by the back of the hill, and come down that hollow, we should be within fair distance from the

rock." "If he'll only lie still, and give us time enough." This, however, the stag had determined not to do; for when we came to the hollow, he had risen from his rocky couch, and was immediately detected by Robertson, quietly taking his breakfast, among his hinds, a considerable way below. The place was so open all round that it was impossible to get near him, and the mist soon afterwards came on so thick that we only knew that the deer were all round us by their incessant bellowing. The forester looked much disconcerted; for, in addition to the mist, a drizzling rain began to descend. We sat down behind a hillock, and I desired the under-keeper to produce the provision-basket. "If there was only a breeze!" says Robertson; "and I do believe it's comin', for the draps o' rain are much heavier." And so it proved, for the mist again partially cleared. We hastened to take advantage of the change; and Robertson, ten yards in advance, mounting every knoll, and searching every hollow with an eye that seemed to penetrate the very mist, suddenly threw himself upon the ground, and signalled us to do the same. A roar like that of a bull presently let us know the cause; and on a little amphitheatre about five hundred yards off, his profile in full relief, stood as noble a stag as ever "tossed his beamed frontlet to the sky." There he was, like knight of old, every now and then sounding his trumpet of defiance, and courting the battle and the strife. Nor did he chal-

lenge in vain, for while we were admiring his majestic attitude, another champion rushed upon him, and a fierce encounter followed. We could distinctly hear the crashing of their horns, as they alternately drove each other to the extremity of the lists. "I wish the ball was through the heart o' one o' ye!" muttered the under-keeper. His wishes were soon to be realised; for the younger knight, who seemed to have the advantage in courage and activity, at last fairly drove his adversary over the knoll and disappeared after him. Robertson now rushed forward, signing to me to follow, and peeping cautiously over the scene of contest, slunk back again, and crawled on hand and knee up a hollow to a hillock immediately beyond—I following his example. When we had gained this point, he took another wary survey, and whispered that the hinds were on the other side of the knoll, within thirty yards. It was now a nervous time, but I could not help admiring the coolness of the forester. Without the least appearance of flurry, he had both eyes and ears open, and gave his directions with distinctness and precision. "That will do; there goes a hind, the whole will follow. Place your rifle on that stone, you'll get a famous chance about eighty yards."—"He'll come at last," he again whispered, as hind after hind slowly passed in review, when a roar was heard immediately below us. "As sure as I'm leevin', he's comin' on the very tap o' us. Hold the rifle this way, sir, and shoot him between

the horns the moment his head comes ower the knowe." I had scarcely altered my position, when head, horns, and all, appeared in full view. Seeing us in a moment, he was out of sight at a bound, but, taking a direction round the base of the hillock, presented his broadside a beautiful cross-shot. I had plenty of time for deliberate aim, and the Red Knight of the Wilds lay low and bleeding.

It was now nearly four o'clock, and the forester had some doubts whether we could get him to Inveroran that night; but as I was anxious to start early in the morning, we despatched the follower for a cart, and with great difficulty dragged the stag by the horns down the hill to the road. Notwithstanding the weather, I had been delighted with my expedition, and only regretted having killed the younger and victorious champion instead of his more bulky rival. During our walk to the inn, I had many anecdotes of former bloody deeds in the forest from Robertson, and not a few where the balls had flown scatheless. One, in particular, amused me. The Marquis, accompanied by two friends—one of them, I should imagine, more famous for his scientific than sporting qualifications—was stalking some very fine harts. When within rifle-distance, his lordship and one of his friends were crawling over a knoll, in order to select the best of the lot. "What are they about up there?" said the *virtuoso*. "*There* are the deer." Bang! bang! Off went the harts in a

twinkling, wishing, I have no doubt, that they had always such fair warning when danger was near.

We passed, during the day, several forest-baths, in full use—*i. e.*, moss-holes where the stags plunge up to the neck and roll about to cool themselves, in summer and autumn. When they come out again, black as pitch, they look like the evil genii of the mountain. In former times poachers used to fasten spears with the points upward in these places, and when the stag threw himself into the hole, he was impaled.

Lord Breadalbane has a very fine kennel of dogs exclusively for bringing the wounded deer to bay. They are for the most part a breed between the fox-hound and greyhound, but some are between the deer-hound and fox-hound. The former are reckoned the best winded. The forester is justly proud of these dogs, mentioning that some of them, when chasing a cold (unwounded) hart with hinds, were so knowing, that, should the hart give them the slip at a burn, and run down it, they would stop their pursuit of the hinds, recover his track, and hold him at bay all night should no one come to their relief. The cunning of the old forest rangers is also remarkable. Once, when some young dogs were being entered at the two-year-old harts, a stag-royal presented himself, but, seeing he was not the immediate object of pursuit, he witnessed the whole chase from the shelter of a plantation; and when the foresters returned, they

again started him, close to where he was first put up, when he dashed into the thicket of the wood. There was a tame one kept at one of the shooting-lodges which attacked every one but the foresters, and at last was removed to the park at Taymouth. This fellow became so savage and expert with his antlers, that he killed, I have been told, two horses, and no one dared to pass his haunt unless he knew them.

The finest red-deer head I ever saw was that of a park-deer killed by a stab in the flank from another in the Duke of Athole's park at Blair. Of course high feeding was the cause of his immense horns. Such a head is never met with in a wild state. I have now a five-year old in my brother's park at Rossdhu, and mean to try whether good keep will have the like effect upon *his* antlers. He is very savage; no one dares to go near him without a dog. The Athole deer was fourteen years old.

DEER-DRIVING IN MULL.

"Hunts he Bentalla's nimble deer?"

DEER of the woods, although often large and heavy, are seldom gifted with what foresters call "a good head." The cover of trees is unfavourable to that branching development of the horns which a life on the open hills seems more fitted to foster. As "heath-covered Mull" is entirely grazed by sheep, its deer feed chiefly in the tangled woods and copses, and are loath to show themselves on the bare hill, where they may be chased by a collie dog, or "potted" by its master's "swan post," with no witnesses to the murder but the "wild flock," the eagle, or the raven.

I was tenant of two good deer-drives in Mull distant about ten miles from each other—Bentalla, the faithless "Lord of the Isles'" hunting-ground, rising between. The Scalastal range on the "Sound" contained two large woods. One of them, however, called Garmony, had been lately cut, and was next to useless. But the Scalastal wood, when the wind

was in the right direction, generally harboured some old deer. To keep all quiet, I also rented Scalastal farm and farmhouse, turning my shepherds into game-preservers, and training their sheep-dogs to run the deer.

Glenforsa, the other shooting-quarter, was situated on the opposite side of the island. In addition to some smaller patches, there were the fine hillside coverts of Garrochree and Torlochan—the former as wild a jungle as even this rugged island could grow. When either of these shootings was driven, especially if the deer were much frightened and the wind favourable, they were apt to cross Bentalla to the other. So, after a hunt at Scalastal, we were not unlikely to find the same deer next day at Glenforsa, and *vice versâ*.

Like many tenants of deer, we were limited on both shootings. Three harts and two hinds was the Glenforsa allowance. A like number of hinds on Scalastal, but they were not so strict about the harts. These restrictions seldom annoy the man who kills his full complement, but they are most disgusting to a party who, at the close of a season, are far below the figure it was thus plainly intimated they were *expected* to slay. My predecessor, although assisted by his keeper and other guns, did not kill one deer among them the whole season. I also knew a party in the north, limited to seventy-five harts, end the season with fifteen, and in the shooting of this small lot they were aided by the resident foresters.

The first year of my Glenforsa lease I had only a few days at its deer. Our first stag was killed by my son when I was in England. I had charged him not to disturb the Glenforsa deer until my return, and he had kept strictly to small game at Scalastal. Two days before I was expected in Mull he drove over to Glenforsa House, with my Scalastal farm overseer, to prepare for our hunt. On the low ground along the banks of Loch-na-Gaul, with the river Knock flowing through it, is a detached strip of plantation much liked by deer, and, if undisturbed, seldom without them. When moved they have three escapes from this wood. When they break at the south corner and make for Garrochree, two of these escapes are guarded by the Knock pass. But should they seek safety in Torlochan wood, they slip out from the middle of the plantation, running east over a bare field, at the top of which, under cover of a drain, is placed the rifle. The Knock pass is far the most certain, not only as commanding two escapes, but also from being more used by the deer.

On the second afternoon, my son, having completed his arrangements, agreed with the manager that, as the deer would be nearly certain to break cover at the Knock pass, there could be no harm in giving this patch an afternoon trial. Of the two chances commanded by the Knock pass, one is exactly 120 yards, the other about 30. It is impossible to equalise the distances without sacrificing one of the chances.

Yarrow's shrill yelp in the plantation soon warned my son that the manager had found deer. A large stag broke on the lower side of the river, came softly round the knolls, and made for the 120-yards pass. Here he had to cross the water, but seemed in no hurry to wet his feet. The collie had not yet left the wood, and the hart listened and watched to see when he would leave it. All this time, the deer being in a slanting posture, my son refrained from firing, well aware that the moment the hart attempted to ford he must present a fair broadside. Black Yarrow now flitted from the covert, and the stag cautiously waded into the stream. Crack goes the rifle, down came the deer on his knees—recovered, and began to hobble across the current. A shot from the second barrel, and he toppled over in mid-stream.

The first act after killing a deer is to examine where the ball has hit him. This time there were two marks through the brisket, on the opposite side to the shooter, but only one on the near side; it was therefore apparent that both balls had entered at the same hole. Considering the distance, this was therefore a beautiful right and left rifle-shot. The weight of this deer was 18 stone, and he had a very good head for Mull. I was much pleased with this auspicious start; the more so as the manager saw more deer in the wood, which he had refrained from disturbing.

Dogs thoroughly trained to drive deer-coverts, even

when running a hot scent, should be taught immediately to quit it, and return to their master at his whistle. The reason is obvious. When the deer are through the passes, further pursuit by a dog only tires *him* and scares the deer further away. As soon, therefore, as the quarry before them are past the rifles, the dogs should be called back into the covert to find a fresh track. Often a stray hart or hind turns back by facing the drivers, and remains quietly hid until the wood is searched a second time. An old Mull collie, which once aided our drive, was so knowing, that of his own accord he returned to his master whenever the deer had escaped the shooters. This sagacious creature knew every ambush guarding the wood, and as soon as the deer were out of danger, quite comprehended that it was useless to follow where there were no rifles to kill.

Our cover pack consisted of two pure-bred Mull collies, and a mongrel sheep-dog, which looked like a cross between the old Scotch cur and a jackal. The island pair were *mis*-named Trim and Yarrow by their Tweedside master (my farm-grieve), but the nondescript was more aptly styled the "Ugly Buck." He was a cross-grained, eccentric, unsociable, surly brute —had to have his teeth broken for biting the sheep— would follow or obey no one but his shepherd-master, and when fairly "blooded" at deer, considered himself discharged from the meaner duties of sheep. Although Trim and Yarrow had good noses, and stuck

well to their track, yet somehow I always felt most certain of a shot when the covert rang with the wolf-like howl of the Ugly Buck.

The day after my landing in Mull was pouring rain, but the following brightened up again. Scarcely expecting above one chance, I only put four bullets in my pocket, and took a single-barrel seal-rifle, which fitted me exactly.

The manager, his two Mull shepherds, and their three dogs, were sent to the far end of the Knock plantation, while I guarded the Knock pass, and my son watched the other escape to Torlochan wood. The dogs had hardly been thrown into covert when they opened full cry. I distinctly heard the hunt begin at the north end, and gradually near the south of the plantation. Soon two hinds broke below the river, but instead of making for the ford of the Knock, and giving me the 120-yard chance, they kept the open shore of Loch-na-Gaul, and, *contrary to all precedent*, took refuge on the hills of Knock.

I was testily watching their wilful course, when I heard a step approaching on the *near* side of the river. In a moment I knew it to be a deer's. A dip in the ground concealed the tramper until a pair of horns rose about 30 yards from my hiding. A fairer chance there could not be. He crossed at a trot, and I shot him through the heart. My son from his pass had noted this hart the moment he quitted the wood—had marked him confidingly choose his

way straight for my hiding-place—was well aware that I could not see him until he came slap upon me—and, to crown all, perceived my attention fixed on the hinds. The thrilling suspense did not cease until he saw me present my rifle. This deer weighed 15 stone, but had a poor head.

The overseer assured us there were two more hinds in the wood, which had "turned back." To give my son *his* turn, we exchanged passes, but fortune again favoured me: the hinds broke at the wood-side for Torlochan, came up the field, and cantered past me at about 60 yards. I rolled over the largest, and if my rifle had been a double-barrel, I had an easier chance at her companion.

We now had to choose our stances for a beat of the large hill-wood of Torlochan. Again the most likely pass was awarded to my son, while I chose mine by the side of a detached rock called the "Rock" pass. This extensive covert requires to be searched with great care and labour. I heard the shouts of the men—now up the hill, now down, then across—until I was quite tired out; not a deer seemed to be in the wood. All of a sudden our pack struck up a jarring chorus. At first the chase bore for my son's ambush, but passing it out of range made for mine. A hind soon showed herself about 100 yards off. I used my rock for a rest and fired; the deer staggered, then slowly walked towards me. When within 40 yards she halted—a lovely chance. Of course I

began to load the single barrel. She listened for a moment, then slunk beyond the adjoining heights. Taking a circuit for the wind, I came round them, and was expecting every instant to come upon the wounded deer, when a fresh pair of hinds turned up at long range on the open heath. Putting up the 200-yard sight, I fired the last of my balls! I saw it miss the deer and strike the hill about a foot before them. After loading with powder, I put my hand into my pocket for the bullet!! Here was a fix—for within 100 yards of where I threw away my last ball stood the stricken hind. She allowed me to walk within the fairest range, then limped down the hill, taking refuge in the thickets of Garrochree. It was more than an hour ere I could collect my men and dogs, but by that time the scent had cooled, not even the Ugly Buck deigning to notice it. We searched till dusk, by which time I had come to the conclusion that it is less troublesome to take too many bullets than too few.

THE GARROCHREE STAG.

He was a lonely one, caring nothing for company, large, intensely cunning, and carrying a royal head. From his partiality to the impervious whins of Garrochree he had gained his title. He never willingly left his fastness, except when the flies forced him, returning to it whenever the July sun had abated its

fierceness. When hunted he ran a ring round and round the thickest underwood, avoiding every open, and confounding the dogs by the labyrinth of his traces. I have known him dodge about in this manner for half a day, and yet never be once seen by either sportsmen or beaters. The well-known "catch a weasel asleep" might well have been applied to him; and yet this big weasel *had* been caught napping, but for breaking the proverb had nearly paid the forfeit of his life.

A former tenant of Glenforsa had an eight-barrelled rifle with which he used to astonish the Mull natives by breaking bottles at fabulous distances; and no doubt he was a crack rifleman—*at the target.* One calm summer day, soon after his taking possession, a woodcutter, in passing through Garrochree wood, spied a pair of antlers peering out above the low whins. Shrewdly suspecting the owner of the horns could not be far off, the man of the axe went to Glenforsa house and apprised Mr —— of his discovery. The eight barrels were soon shotted, and the rifleman, guided by the woodman and accompanied by the farm-grieve (who told me the above particulars), was soon close to the stag's lair. The rifleman was perfectly concealed; and to increase his chances of success the deer had risen, and, all unconscious of peril, was cropping the rich grass within point-blank range. The eight barrels were levelled: barrel 1, the stag started; barrel 2, looked about to see where the noise

came from; barrel 3, walked a few paces, and then listened; barrel 4, shook his head and looked towards the enemy; barrel 5, the stag, like a determined duellist, having accepted five shots, thought he had done enough to prove his courage, and resolved never to stand fire again.

Our men and dogs having been quite done up by severe work, we gave them a day's rest to enable them to do justice to our last deer-hunt of the season. But the wind was "wrong" for our final day. No deer consequently in Knock wood—not a track in Torlochan—the evening fast closing in, and our only hope the rugged jungle of Garrochree. To humour the wind and command a view of the hunt, we occupied the high passes; but, after the morning failures, had about as much hope of moving a rhinoceros as a red-deer. I was listlessly looking at the men taking ground ere they threw the dogs into the thicket, when my eye picked up a deer slowly threading a devious course, but evidently making for the open hill. With keen interest I watched its many wayward angles and wheels, when, suddenly halting and casting a glance at the baffled dogs and men, it stalked into the bare ground—a majestic royal stag. Choosing the pass immediately beyond those where we were concealed, and bringing his noble profile into full relief against the evening sky, he disappeared leisurely over the ridge of the hill. This was the first time I saw "the Garrochree stag," but it was not the last.

Our second Mull season began as prosperously as the first, but we had the advantage of another gun, both my sons having got a fortnight's leave from their regiments. Before settling to regular work, the "green hand" had the honour of drawing first blood, by killing a hart of 14 stone, at a scrambling afternoon beat of Torlochan wood. It was a snap in the thick of the trees with an S.S.G. cartridge, and the only shot fired that day.

Our plan was to give several days first to Scalastal, reserving the last week for Glenforsa, as a *bonne bouche*.

It was the first week of October, and the stags had given notice by some trumpet-blasts that the season of warfare was at hand. The Scalastal overseer told us they came down after nightfall to feed on a field of turnips close to the farmhouse, and one of them for the last few nights had been "roaring like mad." I was seated by a good fire reading, when the man popped in his head to say that the stag was "at it again," and urging me to come out and hear his defiant music. The sudden change from the bright and comfortable glare of the fire and candles to the solemn gloom of a moonless and starless night, whose silence was only broken by occasional bellowings of the stag, suggested to one's fancy an Indian prairie or African desert rather than one of our own Hebrides covered with its brown heath and shaggy wood.

When the grieve thought my mettle was up for a

shot, he slyly observed that a fowling-piece loaded with buck-shot *might* hit them, even in so dark a night, and felt confident that he could grope his way to the gap in the wall where the deer entered to "*spoil* (!) the neeps," and by which they also retreated when satisfied. To prevent them getting our wind, we had to make a considerable circuit through rough hill ground, to clamber over a high fence, and, worst of all, to cross Scalastal brook. Had I not been confident the man could find his way blindfold, I should certainly have declined the whole thing. No sooner had we quitted the outer door into the black still darkness, than I felt powerless as a child. The overseer, however, was alert enough. First tracing a sheep-path to guide him to the fence, which he followed down until he discovered the rude steps he sought, then listening for the brook, he rather anxiously whispered, "If we were but through the burn," and led the way. The burn was full of large stones, deep linns, and swollen by recent rain; but by finding the ford we managed to scramble through, about knee-deep. Guided by the bellowing of the deer (for we now distinguished more than one roaring), the gap in the turnip-field was easily found, and I was quickly squatted, so as to have the quarry between me and the sky when steadying themselves for the leap down from the field into the moor. My sons and the shepherds had to move them from the lower end, where they were now feeding, and when they reached the

gap they would be about ten paces from my ambush. A few minutes of suspense, and we heard the rush of the deer bounding in our direction. They halted with only the wall between us. Every moment I expected a dark figure on the sky-line, but they seemed bent on trying our patience. Only when the drivers were close on them did they deign to move; and then, instead of their convenient egress, wandered alongside the wall and made an uncomfortable exit at the burn! The wind being all right, it was impossible they could either have smelt, seen, or heard us, and we could only account for the mishap by that caprice common to all living creatures as well as deer. When groping our way home, we consoled ourselves by the hope that we should certainly find these same harts next day in Scalastal wood.

When the wind is north, the south passes of course guard the extensive oak copse of Scalastal. They are four in number, nearly in line. As the wood hangs on a hillside, the passes rise one above the other, and were known to us as the high pass, the middle pass, the low pass, and the lowest pass. Attended by the grieve, to point out the ground, we scaled the hill, directing the shepherds to allow us twenty minutes law, before throwing the dogs into the low side copse-wood flanked by the burn. I preferred the middle pass (*medio tut.*, &c.), my eldest son the high one (*excelsior*), his brother the highest he could get (!), and the lowest was left to itself and *the deer*.

never took her eye from us until, having got fairly in her rear, I began to whistle and draw up. As I hoped, she went away at a walk, looking now and then over her shoulder to see if she was pursued. The marksman above had thus ample time to shift his ground, so as to meet her at the nearest point among the heights. She never detected the ambuscade until within 40 yards, when she was saluted by a right and left. Starting off at speed, she made straight for the other gun, but the rough ground soon hid her, until we heard a single shot. Glad that it was not a *double* one, we hurried up to see the sportsman triumphantly seated on his quarry. It was only a yearling, and had been fairly hit by the double shot, some of the pellets we picked out of the hair not having even penetrated the hide. The single shot was only about ten yards off, and killed her on the spot.

Early next morning our "'bus" was at the door for Glenforsa. This massive equipage had a railed roof strong enough to bear a ton, immovable windows, and a low door at the stern, usually strapped open. We yoked the heaviest of the farm-horses as wheeler, and in the lead an old white Mull "garron" of twenty-five, harnessed with cart-ropes, and ridden by the lightest shepherd as postilion. When the top was loaded with provisions, and the inside filled by sportsmen, dogs, and rifles, with the overseer as state-coachman, we ground slowly but merrily along, to the wonder and amusement of Mull residents.

The wind had not been in "the richt Glenforsa airt" for some days, so of course there were few deer on the ground. Our first hunt was thoroughly unsuccessful. Only one hind in the Knock which bounded past me out of all fair distance for Torlochan wood. I put up the long sight, and missed with both barrels. We were now sure of at least one deer in Torlochan, and, as usual, took post to guard the runs from this wood to Garrochree. The highest Torlochan pass, which I chose, commands a fine view of Garrochree, so I was nearly certain to detect deer leaving either wood. The dogs soon found the hind in Torlochan, and chased her round the wood, when she bolted through an unguarded pass into Garrochree. Trim and Yarrow followed in company, and I was tracing their course, and trying to make out the quarry among the trees, when full before me, and within a short distance of his first escape, stood the Garrochree stag. Well aware that the dogs were not after him, he was complacently watching the hunt, and when he saw his territory fairly invaded, retreated through his customary defile. I looked revengefully at his exit, and hoped to come round him yet. With the exception of these two deer, all our coverts were drawn blank; and after a hard day's work we returned to Glenforsa house—cheered, however, by a change of the wind.

The customary rest-day was given to the pack, which we devoted to the Glenforsa pheasants, killing

the round dozen, besides hares and rabbits. As the wind had continued steady, we felt sure of deer next day, and in walking home were concerting the best mode of driving the covers, when the overseer met us with dejected mien. "The Ugly Buck has bolted after his master to Scalastal," says he. "We cheated him a' day that Dugald was here, but the naasty beast fan' us oot and set after him." To supply the place of the truant, we asked a day's driving from the shepherd who owned the old dog already referred to, which was at once cheerfully given.

Maclean and his collie walked up the avenue next morning—just such a study as would have charmed the eye and inspired the pencil of our late unrivalled Wilkie. He was a tall, broad-shouldered, handsome young man, with black curly hair streaming under the blue bonnet, a shepherd's crook in his hand, and that peculiar shamble which proved at once that the roads were his detestation and the hills his delight. His dog, known as the best in Mull, would not have been tolerated among the useless showy creatures that generally take first prizes at dog exhibitions, for it required a thorough sportsman to appreciate his points. Low in size and stiff in gait, his limbs slightly curved, and his hair wiry—at a passing glance most people would have called him ugly; but the broad chest, the round firm foot, the breadth of the head between the ears, and the exceeding intelligence and mildness of the eye, would soon have arrested the attention of a

real judge of canine merit to the exclusion of all other fanciful points of useless beauty.

Wishing to take full service out of the man and his dog, we set him to the large rough woods of Torlochan and Garrochree first, reserving the Knock for the evening, if we had time. After giving strict injunctions to the grieve not to allow his dogs to break into Garrochree again, I chose the lowest pass, where the hind eluded us before. The chance is generally a long-running one, but open and broadside. The dogs found at once, and stuck to their game beautifully. Several times the deer came close to my pass, then seemed to lose heart when facing the open, and returned to the shelter of Torlochan. There was a larch plantation close to me, by which deer might have skulked into Garrochree, but it was so near to the cultivated ground that they were afraid to try it. Yet, after several times shirking her "beaten path," the hunted deer bounded down this wood within 40 yards of the bush where I lay in wait. The shot was so quick as to be *almost* a snap: she darted forward like the wind. My left barrel was so arrant a snap that I never saw the deer drop. After despatching her with my knife, I found my first ball had passed through her entrails, and the second broken both her hind-legs. Had it not been for this last fortunate chance, she might possibly have escaped for the present, although certain to die soon after in the woods.

Before disturbing Garrochree, we went by the side

of Loch Baa to a small lonely oak copse, where a good hart had harboured all summer. My pass was again the low one, and by lying flat I had the benefit of a fine rest for the rifle. No sooner into covert than the pack opened, and in a short time I spied the stag's horns coming out of the wood. It was an enviable chance—fair, open, slow, and broadside. It *would* have been a bungle had he not dropt to shot. Weight, 17 stone, and a very good head.

Now for the Garrochree stag! "We know his tricks—only let him try them," was the boast of our party when marching to rouse the doomed monster. His retreat was securely barred by my eldest son, while I took my former vantage-ground to give notice of his approach by a wave of my cap. He was at home as usual, but no persuasion could force him from his fastness. In vain Maclean's dog found him several times hid in an impenetrable thicket: he always ran the ring of the jungle, and then clapping suddenly down, was lost until he was rested for another race. I never ceased watching the old collie, and never saw such endurance and pluck shown by any dog that ran the foot. Sticking to his track like a bloodhound, not once overrunning it, or slacking his pace, facing briers and whins that appalled the other dogs, and all the time attending to the slightest signal of his master, he proved himself nobly possessed of intelligence, perseverance, and self-command, qualities which have always been the making of great *men!*

Returning home jaded enough by a hard day, yet pleased with its success, we were welcomed by the Ugly Buck and his master, just arrived from Scalastal. As we dared not part them again, we despatched the pair in the fishing-coble to bring home the hart—the hind lay within a few hundred yards of the house.

A Scotch mist was a good excuse for declining the hills next morning, and as there were only two more days before the steamboat touched at our island, the dogs would be nicely rested for the concluding hunt. It was a lovely one that last day in Mull—bright, calm, and bracing enough to inspirit a clod. Of course, the first point to prove was whether *the* stag would try skulking tactics. A short cut led me to the look-out on the hill; but my son had to go round with the beaters and ascend the high ground from behind, so as to humour the wind and reach his ambush unobserved. I saw him breasting the hill and nearly on its crest, when one of the shepherds thoughtlessly called to the dogs. It was a low caution, yet was distinctly heard by me through the thin air, and of course by the wily deer. As the rifleman, however, was now on the hill-top, and rapidly descending to his post, all seemed safe, when at this critical moment, and never suspecting that an enemy was marching parallel and would soon be in possession of the defile, quietly emerged from the thicket the object of our wiles. Scarcely able to restrain my impatience, I yet felt sure that a "haste signal" would put the stag on

his guard; but if left to his own devices, he might possibly linger until retreat was death. The marksman, equally unconscious of the magnificent trophy almost within reach of his rifle, stepped briskly on, and was within rifle-shot of the pass when the deer glided carelessly into it. Had he been aware of the position of his victim, even now the stag could not have escaped; but by inadvertently crossing his wind the danger was instantly revealed. Raising his branching front, and snuffing the "tainted gale," he vanished suddenly round the hill, and with him all hope of adding to our list the royal head of the Garrochree stag.

As there were no more deer in Garrochree, the hunt was sent round to the north end of Torlochan to beat up for the south passes, which we had now to guard. My son having chosen the low pass, where the last hind fell, I had simply to face about, and walk a few paces forward to command the high runs. A view of the distant sea, flanked by its noble range of mountains, with the silvery Loch Baa at my feet, had pretty well lulled my vigilance, when a single shot from below roused me from my reverie. The three dogs soon after swept through the low pass full cry, and, skirting the shores of the loch, seemed making for the rough cover of Garrochree. Although nearly a mile above, I saw a small object take the water and strike out for the opposite side. Fixing the telescope, I felt satisfied that the noise had scared a sheep (no

unfrequent result) from the low banks into Loch Baa for safety. It had nearly gained mid-loch when I heard the rapid stroke of oars, and presently the fishing-coble, pulled by the shepherds at their utmost stretch, headed back the swimmer in the direction from which it had started. I now distinctly traced two animals in the water, and their pursuer running to meet them at the salmon-point, where they seemed bent on landing. He fired, and missed the head of one, which wheeled about and swam for another point, but its companion struck ground and fell dead to the second barrel. The boatman quickly took the sportsman on board, and ere the first he fired at could gain the shore he shot her through the head. The pair, an old hind and her calf, were the only deer in Torlochan wood; and the marksman being *now* in no humour to throw away a chance, had hit the hind through the back running, at 130 yards, when she took the water, followed by her calf. The latter was fortunately a male, so we had exactly completed our year's lot of three harts and two hinds.

A CONTRETEMPS.

I shall conclude these wood-driving reminiscences of Mull by a deer-stalking incident at my next shooting-quarter, which, as a "comedy of errors," was quite unique.

Accompanied by a friend and my second son, we

were returning from fishing the high pools of the Falloch, when the hill-watcher met us in hot haste with the welcome news that a couple of harts were feeding in a wild corrie of the Arnan, and he did not think they were likely to be disturbed, or quit their ground for some time.

Leaving our friend and the keeper to finish the lower waters of the river, my son and I made short work of exchanging rods for rifles, and were soon at the base of the Arnan hill. The watcher's face grew long, for the deer had shifted, and although we were all right as to the wind, yet a slight movement among any of the numerous sheep feeding all round might instantly put them on their guard.

Peter Robertson, of the "Black Mount," had kindly lent us a very good lurcher for bringing wounded deer to bay, yclept Friday, whose black coat was another source of anxiety. Sending the man forward with a telescope, we squatted down with the lurcher behind a bank, determined to wait patiently till our spy was thoroughly satisfied. In about half an hour he returned, his radiant visage, even before he spoke, showing all was right. The harts, he told us, were resting on a height some way off, but by humouring the ground I soon got a capital view of them. They might be approached from below or from above, but I always like the high stalk best, as deer are so much less apt to look up than down hill. In this instance the watcher was clearly for the low approach, as he

feared our deer-hound might scare the sheep, scattered thickly over the heights. Notwithstanding, I decided to risk it, and by *stalking* the sheep and screening the dog among us, we at last got safely beyond them. The harts were now close at hand; so leaving the watcher with Friday on the leash, we were soon at the back of the knoll, where we had seen them lying. I directed my son to keep about eighty yards above me, lest they might have risen, and separated, but not to show himself until I had fired.

On looking through a tuft of heather, I saw the deer on their legs—fine side chances—the largest about 50, and the other fully 100 yards off. I fired a double shot; and my son called down, "You've done for them both." The near one ran a short way and fell dead, but the other, dropping on its knees, rolled over the opposite side of the height, on the crest of which it was standing, and limped down the hill until close to my son, where it halted, staring at him within pistol-range. At this moment, a third hart galloped across the face of the corrie, which I mistook for the wounded one, and called to the watcher to slip the dog. There was a beautiful course, Friday turning the deer whenever he tried the steep, but down-hill the hart had the best of it. Expecting soon to be warned by the bay that our fugitive was "at a standstill," we all followed in pursuit; but when poor Friday returned chopfallen and bloodless, our disappointment was extreme. "At any

some of the old "Billies" of the wild breed was eighteen inches long; and I have contrasted a horn of the last fine specimen of the race, shot many years ago, with a good-sized one of the domesticated species. To stalk these half-tame goats afforded no small diversion, and I have seen several sportsmen engaged nearly a whole day before the fatal shot was fired. But in their wilder state, I am told, they showed amazing game, tact, and cunning in eluding an enemy. The hero, whose horn I have represented, managed to escape several of the most experienced hands in the country, some with ball and others with buck-

shot, for a couple of days. He was brought down on the evening of the second day, after being hard struck a short time before; and I have been assured that even larger goats than he have been killed upon the island, with horns proportionably finer.

Another circumstance also made me imagine that goat-stalking might be practicable. One of my father's tenants, who farmed the remote range of Glen Douglas, had a flock of goats pastured among the precipices. This flock was always under the command of the shepherds and their dogs. A fine old Billy, however, broke away from the rest, and spurned all

control. This lasted upwards of a year, when he became so completely wild that it required half-a-dozen shepherds, with their guns, to range the mountains for some days before he could be shot.

As further proof how strong the love of freedom is implanted in the goat, I heard of another patriarch of the flock, who appeared also disgusted with the monotony of his tame life, and who, like the captive Bedouin longing for the desert, again sought his congenial wilds. He left Tyndrum, wandering from mountain to mountain, a passing shepherd now and then catching a distant glimpse of him in his progress, and was at last discovered to have chosen his quarters in a retreat as savage and solitary as that romantic district could afford.

I am aware that many objections might be raised against my suggestion; first, that the goats would never be wild enough to afford sport, and that, if they were, they would be apt to take refuge among inaccessible rocks and precipices, where no man could stalk them. I own that it would be many years before goats could become quite wild; but if a fine breed were turned out on some of the steepest and least frequented of our mountains, and especially if they were never disturbed or *brought to bay by dogs*, I have no doubt that their progeny would become fit for stalking. And as to sheltering themselves in rocks and precipices, they would be far less apt to do this when they had acquired confidence in other

means of escape. I only, however, mention goat-stalking as an untried amusement, and think it might be worth while for the proprietors of Highland mountains to make the experiment. Sheep-farms, where deer never remain, would answer the purpose. Goats do not interfere with the sheep, and generally choose the roughest ground where the pasture is of least value. It is unnecessary to say that the old males would be uneatable, but the mountain-fed kids are reckoned very delicious.

CRAP-NA-GOWER.

The heather was bare and run to seed, the bell had long faded, and the grouse were wild and packed, when I received a note from my brother to say "that, in consequence of the mischief the flock of wild-goats had done to the newly-planted trees on his deer-island, he had determined to extirpate them; but had reserved the two old Billies for my rifle." Well pleased, I obeyed the summons.

The evening I came to Rossdhu was dull and cold; rather *watery*-looking for the west; but at grey of next morning I threw up my window, and was happy to find that it had cleared to bright starlight, with a crisp night's frost. The ivy-owl was sounding his melancholy note, foreboding abdication, while old chanticleer welcomed the first faint streaks of the dawn by a blast from his cheery trumpet. It had

a curious effect, and seemed a contention between the spirits of night and morning. It was a good omen, for the sun rose in cloudless lustre, and by breakfast-time was flaming down upon the antiquated beeches, now in their rich and variegated autumnal tints, and casting his warmest glow over the red and withered bracken upon the slopes of the distant hills.

I found the bearded chief was at least ten years old, and his henchman about two years younger. They had been the progeny of a cross between the original wild black goat of the rock, and a tame white Billy of very large size, who fell a victim to the change of life—having hanged himself by the horns on a yew-tree, in attempting to feed upon the higher branches. They had been bred among the craggy ravines on the unfrequented part of the island, and had never left them. A four-oared yawl was soon manned by hardy Highlandmen, and we pushed off for Crap-na-Gower.

There is nothing more exhilarating than the air of these calm autumn mornings. The breath of spring may be more fresh and fragrant, but it is not so buoyant or so clear. The little robin seems to feel its effect; for his monotonous but plaintive wail, sadly sweet, like a lament for summer, is always loudest then. Our loch was calm as glass, and reflected the wooded islands and copses of various hues, relieved here and there by the dark Scotch firs, with their knotted and twisted branches. A black-backed or giant gull, perched upon a large stone at the end of Inch Moan,

was shouting his rough music (which sounded doubly atrocious over the calm expanse) to another couple, floating at a distance so airily upon the clear water, they scarcely seemed to touch it. The giant gull is a beautiful fellow, with his snowy breast and dusky wing; and, barring his voice, he is the greatest ornament to our inland lochs, during summer and autumn, of any bird except the osprey.

Leaving Master Black-back in possession of his platform, like many as noisy an orator equally *au fait* at gull rhetoric, we stood out for the middle of the Loch, in order to have a good view of the rugged part of Inch Lonaig, the territory of the goats. As we expected, we soon twigged their white coats in broad contrast to the dark heather and darker yew-trees. Upon inspecting them through our telescopes, we found they were in a sort of rocky hollow, a capital situation for stalking, and busily engaged in cropping the lower branches of a venerable yew. I saw, with pleasure, that there was considerable difference in their size. When we got to the island, they told us that we could not help knowing the patriarch, as his horns came down to the small of his back.

As my rifle was only a single barrel, I was anxious to make sure of *him* first, in case he might hide, if alarmed by my firing at the other. Should he do so, we might not find him again all day.

Crap-na-Gower, the stronghold of the goats, is perhaps the most fascinating spot of the far-famed Loch

Lomond. It is placed midway between the lovely islands at the foot and the rugged and romantic grandeur at the head of the Loch, and quite commands the best views of both. It rises perpendicularly out of the Loch, by an almost inaccessible succession of rocks and shaggy heather, full of deep holes and caverns. Seen at a distance from a boat, with its wild-goats browsing among the grey rocks and scaurs, shaded here and there by a clump of reverend yews, a finer study for the artist's pencil could not be found. It was to this lone spot, where the poor goats had braved the winter's frost and summer's sun of many a long year, that I now bent my steps, the messenger of their destruction.

We thoroughly knew all the passes, and stationed sentries in them to intercept the goats, should they attempt to cross to the other side of the island, which is about two miles long. When they found their progress blockaded, they would immediately return to Crap-na-Gower. My business then was to find out the pass they would use on their way back, and lie concealed. This was not difficult, as the barricaders in front would give me the signal. A very slight one might suffice, as I was also well acquainted with all the back passes.

I took my telescope in my hand, and was followed by a keeper carrying my rifle. A circuit of a mile, to gain the wind, brought us to the far side of Crap-na-Gower. We were then about a quarter of a mile to

leeward of the two poor goats, who were unsuspectingly munching their delicious repast of yew-twigs, in the full enjoyment of a mid-day sun. Our near approach was over a succession of rocks and knolls covered with heather, so long as nearly to reach the waist. We were constantly kept upon the alert, for this heather often concealed holes that it would have been no joke to have stumbled into; and were also annoyed by the *sunk rocks*, which are often covered as effectually by this long heather as by the waters of the deep.

Having gained the knoll, on the other side of which we hoped to find our victims, we held a consultation as to the point of attack. This arranged, we slunk very warily round the angle of the knoll, in case the goats had moved. It was well we were so cautious; for scarcely had we turned the peak, when the head and long horns of one of the *hirci* rose into view, not more than fifty yards off. He was rearing himself upon his hind legs to reach the branch of a yew-tree, which made the apparition of his head so sudden. I at once dropped into the long heather, and beckoned to the keeper for my rifle. When I crawled forward upon hands and knees, it was quite evident the poor creature had no idea of an enemy. He continued his yew-cropping, occasionally scratching his shoulder with his long pointed horn, which seemed admirably adapted for the purpose. Sometimes he would rear himself upon his hind legs, to seize a twig just out of his reach when on all fours. I was quite amused at

his activity, and the length of time he could remain in this erect posture.

All my endeavours to ascertain whether he was the ten or eight year old were unavailing, and it was impossible to move further, as, in trying to get a sight of the other, I might probably scare both. From his position being rather above me, he looked very imposing, and I felt pretty sure he was the patriarch. Raising my rifle by inches, I fired. The ball struck him true in the centre of the shoulder; but, from his being above me, it took a slanting direction (as we afterwards found), and he did not drop. Up I started; and, at the same instant, the old goat bounded from the opposite side of the tree, and took the lead of his wounded companion. It was now apparent I had struck the junior. A severe race the keeper and I had to keep sight of him; but in vain. The last we saw of him was lagging far behind the other, his snow-white shoulder bedabbled with blood. He soon after disappeared among the rugged ground, and was seen no more that day. The old chief, however, kept on at a swing gallop by himself. Knowing that our sentries would soon turn him, and that his object would then be the rocks of Crap-na-Gower, we kept watching for the signal which was to make us aware of his course. It sounded, and I was again at my post for a shot.

After waiting for half an hour, I saw the tips of his horns coming straight for my ambush, and making for

the wilds of the island,—which, if he gained, adieu to him for that day. Before he came quite up, I raised myself and fired. He halted, and changed his course, but I was up to him. I knew that if I could, by taking a short cut, gain the pass where it entered Crap-na-Gower, I should be pretty sure of an excellent chance. Billy had a long circuit to make, and was, moreover, a good deal blown, so the odds were in my favour.

Throwing off my shooting-jacket, waistcoat, and neckcloth, I cut away at full speed, though in danger every moment of tumbling into one or other of the *natural* pitfalls, or of knocking my rifle to pieces against a rock. Panting and toiling under the burning sun, I at last arrived at the pass, and had scarcely five minutes to recover breath, when William, equally done up, appeared, thundering over the adjoining height. I was in no hurry this time, and allowed him to cross fair, and so present the full target of his side; as I well knew that nothing could keep him from the rocks but a rifle-ball. Crack! The poor animal gave a cry, something between a bleat and a howl (it was far too human to be agreeable), walked on a hundred yards, and then stopped. It was plain his race was run. I loaded as quickly as I could, to put him out of his misery; but whenever I attempted to move, he braced himself up for a last struggle. With one desponding look at his own Crap-na-Gower, which he now despaired of reaching, and was never

to see again, he turned his back upon it, and hobbled slowly to the shore. I did not press him. Poor fellow! I felt too much for him for that. Notwithstanding my "successful skill," I was far enough from regarding him with "apathy." My great anxiety was to end his woes. I watched him to the shore, and then saw him wade out upon a rock surrounded by water. Keeping out of his sight, I stalked him from behind a heathery bank, which ran parallel to the shore, till I got within thirty yards. When I peeped cautiously through the heather, he was standing with his side to me, and his head sunk down nearly to the rock, the very picture of meek despair! Resting my elbow upon the heather, to make sure, I aimed at his heart. He gave one brave bound from the rock to the shore, staggered, and fell dead upon the beach.

There were soon plenty of hands examining his wounds. We found the first ball had grazed his neck, although I fancied I had missed him altogether. It was a wonder to all of us how the second had not finished him, so fairly was he struck. The third passed through his heart.

It was now agreed that we should separate for a thorough search after the wounded goat. It proved unsuccessful, although we were assisted by half-a-dozen pair of active limbs and sharp eyes—the general birthright of Highlanders. The shades of evening drew on, and we were obliged to take to our boat.

* * * * * *

What motive was it that made me decline a shooting-party next morning, and determine upon a second excursion to the Lone Isle? After the narrative of the preceding day, I have little right to expect belief when I say it was compassion. I could not help thinking that the poor goat *might* be alive; and if so, nothing remained for him but a lingering death of pain. Having quickly finished my breakfast, I was soon seated at the oar, with a sturdy partner, and was pulling rapidly for the quiet strand.

The people of the island had been on the outlook; and about two hours before we came, they had seen the goat slowly limping up a hill. With my attendant behind me, I immediately walked off in the direction they pointed out. I had not long to look. Upon the pinnacle of the hill, which commanded a view all round, sat the poor goat, evidently in dread of a surprise like yesterday's. There was no possibility of stalking him; and the moment he saw me, he rose leisurely to his feet, and descended the hill on the other side. He then sauntered to the rocks on the shore, being quite unable to make for the steeps of Crap-na-Gower. We followed to the beach; but, upon getting there, he had hidden again.

After a search of many hours, my follower *winded* him. Upon looking cautiously all round, he detected him completely engulfed in heather, with rocks on each side, and only a small aperture by which he had entered this snug shelter. He had an instinctive

knowledge of the moment he was discovered; for he immediately rose and limped out of his retreat. The man hallooed to me, and I took my station upon a rock which commanded two passes, one of which he must cross, as he was unable to climb the high rocks. When he was within forty yards, I shouted to make him turn off the shore, and thus present a broadside. He only looked up languidly, and kept his course along the beach. He passed directly under me, at the distance of twenty yards, when I fired at the back of his neck, and hit him in the spine: of course his death was instantaneous.

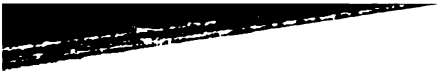
Our boat was at the other side of the island, and we had no time to bring it round; so we could only leave him where he fell, and send early next morning to fetch him home. A light cobble and couple of gillies were alongside of him by five o'clock; but, even before that early hour, Rob Roy's "bedrels, the corbies and the hoodie-craws," had entered upon their office. I made them welcome to their share, but preserved his head, horns, and skin, together with that of his chief, which are as handsome trophies of the chase as any I have in my collection.

ROE-HUNTING.

MANY of the woods that fringe our most romantic lochs and glens abound with the roe; its chief food being the leaves in summer, and the tender tops of the trees in winter. I do not mean to say that it is not also fond of grass or clover, but the other is its most natural choice. So destructive is it to young woods, that many gentlemen give it no quarter on this account. Even trees of considerable growth are not safe from its attacks; the buck sometimes fixing his horns against the stem, walking round and round until the ground is bared, and the bark so injured that the tree dies. The favourite haunts of the roe are those belts of young plantation, surmounted by large pine-forests, common throughout the Highlands: the former supply it with food, and the latter give it shelter.

The pursuit of the roe, if followed in a proper way, affords first-rate sport, and taxes to the full the

Roebuck cleaning his horns.



strength, skill, and energy of the hunter; but this is seldom the case, and the generality of roe-hunts are nothing but blunders from beginning to end. The common way of proceeding is, to place half-a-dozen gentlemen with their guns in the passes, and then, with a host of beaters and dogs, to scour the plantations, always commencing at the windward side, where the roes are sure to be found. I confess I have no great liking for this plan: the plantations are thoroughly disturbed, almost every head of game being driven out of them; and I never saw a party of this kind succeed much better than when one or two experienced roe-hunters had the whole sport to themselves.[1]

A description of one of these noisy parties will, with a few exceptions, apply to all. We will suppose the sportsmen snugly in their passes, while the

[1] The roe is occasionally stalked, and shot with the rifle, and I have heard it alleged that it is thus raised to the dignity of a deer, whereas the common method of buck-shot degrades it to the level of a hare. Having several times tried this experiment, I may safely pronounce it a most wretched burlesque upon deer-stalking. Roes almost always confine themselves to the woods; and although, by peeping round corners and openings in the plantations, you may sometimes get a good rifle-shot, yet you are much more apt to come upon them quite within range of buck-shot, especially if the cover is not very thin, which, when a good haunt of roes, it seldom is. They are thus almost sure to see and hear you, and steal away unperceived; but should you succeed in getting the shot, it is pretty certain to be a running one, and you will stand but a poor chance with a rifle at a roe bounding among thick plantations. The great excitement of deer-stalking consists in seeing your game from a distance without being yourself perceived, which affords ample scope for skill and tact in approaching it.

beaters and dogs are in full hoot and howl in the wood below: one man allows the roe to slip by unobserved, until it is almost out of reach, then fires his buck-shot, perhaps wounding his game, which the dogs are unable to run down; another never sees it at all; a third shows himself in the pass, and so throws away his chance; and I have even known two instances of our brethren from the south leaving their posts for a time to take a comfortable luncheon—their love of a roe-pasty prevailing over their love of the chase. One of them was only detected by the hounds and roe having run right through his pass during his absence. Although a man should not be so churlish as to refuse joining a party of this kind, yet I could excuse any knowing roe-hunter for anticipating with greater pleasure and hope of success the day when he may take the field alone.

Such a one will always prefer a day with scarcely a breath of air, high wind being destruction to his sport: first, from the difficulty of hearing the hound; and next, from the currents of air which he will be obliged to avoid, lest the roe should wind him. His only companion is a very slow and steady hound. Thoroughly acquainted with all the passes, he places himself in that he considers the best, ready to change his position should the baying of the hound seem to indicate that the roe has taken a different direction. If it escapes at the first burst, he is not at all disconcerted, as his tactics now begin. The roe perhaps

stretches away into the large pine-forest, and he sees his good hound slowly and surely threading his way through the thick underwood, and hears him making the welkin ring. Now is the time for our sportsman to display the strength of his lungs and limbs. Aware that the roe, after a fair heat, will probably slacken its speed, with the hound scarcely more than a hundred yards behind, and will course slowly round and round a knot of hillocks, perhaps for half an hour at a time, he will use his utmost efforts to keep within hearing of the bay. Whenever this appears nearly confined to one place, he advances with extreme caution, peering round at every step, with his gun cocked and held ready to fire. The sound seems now at hand—again more distant, as it is obstructed by the intervening hillocks ; he conceals himself upon an angle of one of them, near the centre of the knot, to command as good a view both ways as he can. If the hound continues opening near, he watches with the utmost vigilance, almost holding his breath to catch the slightest sound. After waiting some time, should the dog still remain near, he will occasionally shift his position, but always with the same caution.

A novice would scarcely believe the noiseless step with which a roe will often pass, and the scanty covering of brushwood that will screen it from observation. Should it slip by in this manner, you will of course immediately know by the tracking of the hound, which has often made me aware of its almost

magical transit. Attention and experience, however, will considerably lessen the roe's chance of escape. Whenever it takes another direction, follow at your best speed, until it again tries the dodging game. Continue the pursuit so long as your hound is stanch, and your own strength holds out, taking advantage of every pass within and around the wood.

Here let me give two cautions—always to dress as near to the colour of the ground and trees as you can, and, when concealed, never to make the least motion: if you do, the roe will at once perceive it and stop short. You will most likely only be made aware of its having done so by the hound coming within forty or fifty yards, and then turning away in another direction. When properly dressed, even should your place of concealment not be very good, the roe will be pretty sure to pass *if you keep perfectly still*. This caution is even more necessary when expecting a hill-fox. Should the roe take a straight course, right out of your beat, you must await its return; which, if it has not been alarmed or shot at, you may pretty confidently expect.

In recommending the above manner of roe-shooting, it must be remembered that I do not say it is easy; but I do say that, when thoroughly understood, it will be attended with much greater success in the long-run, and that the roes will be less disturbed, than when many of the passes are kept by novices in the sport. I once, in Kenmure wood, at the head of

Loch Lomond, by this mode killed two in a few hours —one of them a very fine old buck—without harassing any others; while a party of five or six of us, and beaters to correspond, after alarming the whole wood, and firing many shots, only got three yearling fawns in four whole days.

Many gentlemen have a great prejudice against allowing hounds to enter their covers, for fear of driving the roes away, when the blame should rather be laid on their large party, unskilful manœuvring, and long random shots. I have had good proof that roes are not so much afraid of fox-hounds as people suppose. A gentleman of my acquaintance had a newly-planted wood much injured by them: he desired the gamekeeper to hunt them out. So little, however, did this frighten them, that they have been known to return within an hour after the hounds were taken off; nor would they leave the place until one or two had been shot.

Nor is this the only instance which has come within my own notice. On the shooting-ground which I took for a season at Kinnaird, in Perthshire, was a pine wood, with an oak copse at the side; here I frequently saw a fine buck and two does feeding. They were very tame, and I tried in vain to beat them out with the shepherd's dogs. I had not then much knowledge of roe-hunting; but I procured an old hound, and pursued them every day for a week without getting a shot. They were still to be found

in their old haunts every morning, although ever so hard hunted the day before. They would take a stretch upon the open moor for an hour, and then return, always keeping together; and it was only by marking a much-used pass that I at length succeeded in getting a very fair right and left, killing the buck with one barrel, and one of the does with the other. A stray shot struck the other doe, which happened to be in line, and broke her leg, although I was not aware of it. Two days after, a farmer sent me notice that a wounded roe had been seen in the wood. I again put the hound into the cover, and in a short time the poor creature came limping past, when I shot it, to prevent the dog from putting it to a more cruel death. I do not mention this as claiming any merit, for the shots were open, near, and easy; greater skill might have secured them some time before: but I think a fair inference in proof of my assertion may be drawn from this and other instances of the kind.

When roes haunt a small belt of plantation, it is often impossible to say where they will break cover. The surest plan is to take a pass a little way off, as the roe, wherever it may break, soon falls into a beaten track when leaving one wood for another.

It is a rare thing to take a right and left at roe; they slip past so quickly, and generally in small numbers. I have known many old sportsmen who have shot them all their lives, and yet never killed

a couple right and left. During my whole shooting life I have only done so five times, and yet few men have slain more roes. Blood-hounds are now coming into vogue, instead of fox-hounds, for running them out of thick coverts. From the truer nose, slower movement, and more deep-toned voice of the blood-hound, he is certainly far better adapted for the purpose. This noble dog is supposed to be the lineal descendant of the old deep-flewed English slot-hound, or talbot; and there is certainly little difference, except in colour. The prevailing hue of the talbot was white; that of the blood-hound is black and tan. All the finer qualities of the talbot have been sacrificed in his degenerate successor—the fox-hound of modern days—to acquire the great desideratum, *speed*.

Never "gralloch"[1] a roe near a favourite pass, *unless you wish it to be forsaken.*

The roe's sagacity in discovering real from apparent danger is remarkable: the crouching shooter with his deadly gun is instantly detected, while the harmless workman may even blast a rock and cause no alarm. This fact I have been assured of by men employed on the Highland road, who had often seen the roes peeping at them from the cliffs above, watching their whole proceedings without any signs of fear.

The roe has no great kindliness for the fallow-deer. It is a curious fact, that there are two large wooded islands in Loch Lomond which the roes constantly

[1] Clean out the inside.

frequent, without ever crossing to a third, where deer are kept, though well adapted to their habits. When swimming in and out of these islands, the roes have regular passes, as on land; but if a boat be near they will never attempt to cross. A few years ago, an English gentleman wishing for a couple, a plan of catching them in the water was thought of. For this purpose boats were concealed near the passes, and the roes hunted out of the islands. But they were such dexterous swimmers, and doubled so well, that they always escaped, until the thought of fixing a noose to a pole suggested itself, by which simple device they were soon secured. In a short time they became quite domesticated, and would eat from the hand of their keeper.

Another was caught many years ago, which my brothers and I, when boys, begged to be allowed to tame. We used to bring it leaves in great quantities, which it would eat from our hands, always preferring those of the mountain-ash. The confinement, however, did not agree with it; and, although supplied with grass, clover, and everything we could think of, it fell off in condition, and we were obliged to set it free.

The roe has two young ones at a time, the most beautiful little creatures possible. It is curious to see them, when started, bound away with the greatest activity, though no bigger than a cat.

GLENFALLOCH ROES.

"The roe, Captain Waverley, may be hunted at all times alike; for never being in what is called pride of grease, he is also never out of season, though it be a truth that his venison is not equal to that of either the red or fallow deer." Such is the stately Baron of Bradwardine's verdict on roes and their venison. And who would deny the conclusion when arrived at from such premises? If the roe is "never out of season," and "may be hunted at all times," and is never "in pride of grease," I fully agree with the Baron, that the vile trash which he calls "venison" is only fit for a dog-kennel. But then the "if"—there's the rub. I dispute his premises *in toto*, and therefore deny his conclusion. The roe may not be hunted at all times alike. The roe *is* out of season the greater part of the year. Roes *are* sometimes in pride of grease, and when shot in this state are superior venison to either red or fallow deer.

I am fully aware that most sportsmen and housekeepers will meet this assertion with a shake of the head; but I am prepared to prove that every season I rented Glenfalloch I shot several roe-deer as fat as good mutton; and in January 1861, the first year of my lease, my son and I killed three bucks within a few days whose kidneys were loaded with fat. Several people came on purpose to satisfy their curiosity

as to the condition of those bucks, and all agreed that if they were not "in pride of grease," no deer ever could be.

Some people insist upon larding roe-deer venison with beef or mutton fat, while others assert that the only way to make roe-flesh tolerable is to stew it. When a roe is out of condition, stewing and larding may disguise it as food, just as the French cook, by the help of condiments, made his master eat his old slippers; but people who would so treat a roe-haunch in prime order deserve never to have an opportunity of spoiling one again.

The condition of roes is far more precarious than that of either red or fallow deer. In some seasons very few good ones are killed at all. Some localities, too, seem much more adapted to fatten them than others. During a lease of three years at Glenfalloch, we killed 31 roe-deer, and of that number 12 were in first-rate condition. The last year of a former lease in Aberdeenshire, I killed 19 roes, and my son 5, but the best of these 24 did not equal the worst of the Glenfalloch dozen. What is stranger still, during the year that we killed most fat ones at Glenfalloch, my brother complained that out of a number killed by them, only 20 miles distant, there was not one really good roe.

Why the Glenfalloch roes were fatter than those on any of my other rented shootings I never could discover; but if even there, and *at the height of the*

season, good ones were so rare, no wonder that the majority of sportsmen and housekeepers have branded roe-venison with the ill name that has hanged so many dogs. The haunches of all our prime roes are simply roasted, and I never saw any one partake of them who did not say they were the most delicate and delicious of all venison. My brother, who had both red and fallow deer in perfection, decidedly gave the palm to roe—*when in condition.*

From the Baron's other assertion, that "the roe may be hunted at all times alike," I differ more completely than about the quality of its venison. The usual autumn announcements that "—— brought down a couple of stags and a fine roebuck," or "several harts and a couple of roe-deer in fine condition," scarcely need comment. The deer are killed at *their* best time of year, and are, of course, as fat as they can be; while the poor roes are massacred out of season, being simply carrion. Until they exchange the red hair for the mouse-coloured, they are only bags of bones covered by some dark dry flesh, with not a particle of fat. The summer coat begins to change for the winter one in September, being complete in November, before which time no roes should be shot. Red-deer harts, on the contrary, never come into prime order until they are divested of the winter grey, and have assumed the rich red of the sporting season.

When the woods are thick with leaves, it is very

difficult to force a roe into open ground at all; but instinct also warns it not to come into view when at its weakest state. Thus, whether for sport or food, the roe should never be hunted except for the short time they are, or ought to be, in their prime; and if this rule is broken, they will equally disappoint the hunter and the gourmand.

Roes shed their horns from the middle of December till January, and are then at their best. They begin to fall off in February; and by the beginning of March they are useless as food till the next roe-hunting season in November.

There are two methods of hunting the roe, the choice of either depending on the extent of the woods and on the nature of the country. In extensive, unbroken, and impervious woods, an old, steady fox-hound is indispensable to force them into open ground and through the passes. Day after day they will dodge about in their favourite fastnesses; but unless the hunter thoroughly understands the sport, and knows every pass and open space of the forest, he will most probably come home each evening without having fired a shot. Should, however, the country be dotted over with small copses and belts of plantation, without one large wood to shelter them, hunting roe with a fox-hound is totally impracticable, and if persevered in, most of the roe-deer will leave the ground altogether. When a good steady hound finds the track of roe, he will stick to it for half a day; and

the quarry, well knowing the futility of seeking concealment in the near coverts, makes for some distant retreat, not to return perhaps for weeks. For such small woods many people prefer beaters; but I have always observed that beaters, after the first few drives, shy the roes more, and make them more wary and cunning than dogs do. I have also this objection to a noisy troop, that it is a lazy and stupid way of killing game.

The Glenfalloch coverts were chiefly of oak copse, with a sprinkling of larch and fir. None of them being of great extent, and all tolerably open, pleasanter roe-shooting could not be had. There were no other guns than my son's and my own, and no other beating aid than one keeper and two retriever dogs. The retrievers were under perfect command, and never were permitted to persecute the roes needlessly; so the latter soon became accustomed to them, and, feeling confident of easily eluding their pursuers even in these small coverts, scarcely ever took the trouble to quit them.

In a larch plantation, close to our doors, a couple of does lived all summer. The larger had twins and the other a single fawn, which they constantly brought within gunshot of the drawing-room window; and when singing was going on, would pause with great curiosity and apparent pleasure. There could be nothing more beautiful in nature than the fairy-like fawns frisking around their graceful mothers, listening to the music in rapt surprise.

hearing the noise, ducked back and took to the hill again, while the buck, making a magnificent six-feet spring over the paling into the copse, fell dead on the other side.

About two hours later my son sighted the other buck feeding in a green open patch of an oak coppice flanked by a wall, which enabled him to secure an excellent still chance. His horns were so loose that one of them was knocked off when he fell.

With three roes in the larder on the first evening of our attack, we did not grudge a couple of frosty days to woodcock, hare, snipe, and such "small deer." On the fourth morning the keeper and pair of retrievers again plied their arduous work in the thickets. The dogs were thrown into the first patch with no great expectation of rousing a roe, but they soon feathered and opened, bringing round the quarry full before my hiding-bush. It was, as I fancied, an enormous doe; and making sure that she must be in as prime order as the bucks last killed, I had great pleasure in rolling her over. What was my disgust on walking up to find it was a buck, and to be convinced from his size and weight that he could be no other than the patriarch, whose antlers had been so often coveted, and which were now lying where he had cast them, as useless lumber, away! When this roe-deer was "gralloched," and an inside disclosed like that of a summer wedder, we began to console ourselves that, though hornless, such "a buck in the

hand" might be worth both him and his horns "in the bush" of next year. These were the three bucks before alluded to; but during the last two seasons of my lease we killed not only some more bucks, but also four does, not a whit behind them in condition.

Although we had such good roe-shooting, there were only four right-and-left shots fired the whole time of our lease. Two of these doublets were distant chances, and fell to my share. Both times there were only a pair of roes; and in each case the first fell, and its neighbour, being badly wounded, was recovered shortly afterwards.

The other two double shots were fired by my second son. On the first trial he killed with one barrel; with the other he missed. Next opportunity, however, both roes dropped to shot. At this fortunate moment he occupied the highest pass on the opposite side of the Falloch, while my other son and I guarded the runs nearly in the line below him. Two large does and a buck crossed within fair range, and from the lower ground we distinctly noticed the pair drop, and the third come thundering down hill in a frantic manner. But its panic, by scaring it from its usual track, saved its life; for although the creature came within reach of the lowest gun, a hollow of the hill hid it at the critical time. The keeper and upper shooter soon after appeared with the buck and largest doe on their shoulders, while the low-pass gun bitterly complained

of the unsocial habits of all roes that had challenged its powers, avowing that, barring the dignity of twin barrels, it might as well have been a single!

A small belt of tangled brushwood fringing the Arnan burn, interspersed with tall firs which had weathered the blasts of a hundred winters, is a favourite feeding-place of the Glenfalloch roes. Seldom more than a pair at a time lodged in this quiet retreat; but whenever these were killed off, others supplied their room. As in most small plantations, the surest passes were at a little distance from the wood; and in this instance our object was to intercept them when making for the hill on their way to the next shelter. When flushed, they were almost sure to choose one of three retreats; but the two top escapes (about 100 yards apart) might with vigilance and activity be guarded by the same gun. Unless watched by eyes thoroughly used to the sport, the roes were almost certain to flit spectre-like into the burn track unperceived; in this case it was impossible to guess which of the two top escapes they would attempt, until too late to change should they attempt the unguarded one. The quick and wary eye of a practised róe-hunter seldom gave them this advantage; and watching every fall or rise in the intervening ground where a passing glimpse might be snatched, he could with all but certainty predict their course, and be ready to welcome them with a salute. I had a particular fancy for these two passes, and by means

of a smart race between them now and then, killed six roes, and did not allow a single escape to the hills.[1]

Our last hunting-day at Glenfalloch was perhaps the most exciting and scientific I ever took part in. We had already bagged 28 roes, and were careless of shooting more—the day, in fact, being intended for small game. The pair of larch-trees which spanned the Falloch, claiming equal right with the celebrated Menai to the title and dignity of bridge, had been safely crossed. Ben Glass with its rugged face had been wellnigh breasted, and I was thinking of the old "packman" frozen to death a year before, and whose cairn, with a shred of his wretched clothes, lay close at hand, when my son gave the warning word "roes!" There were three in group, and a fourth at a short distance from them. All were full grown, and much of a size. Except for a scanty sprinkling of trees interspersed with occasional patches of brushwood, the whole hill-face was bare, and this bareness was more apparent from a thick coating of snow. The creatures seemed fully to comprehend the situation, and to know as well as we did how difficult it would be to steal on them unperceived. Those in company therefore went leisurely ahead, while the single one deigned no further retreat than to move a little on

[1] A woodcock was hiding within a few yards of the place where one of these roes fell. It sprang when we were examining the dead animal, and was cut down by a roe charge.

one side, so as to give us "a wide berth" in passing him. Our game, by showing equal carelessness and *sang froid*, was to entice them to slip quietly into some secluded hiding, either among the alder-bushes fringing the brooks which seamed the mountain-side, or perhaps behind some cluster of hillocks, where by humouring the wind we could stalk them like deer.

As in all wild shooting, success depended entirely on our marking the next resting retreat of the roes, without making them aware that we had done so. It was, in fact, a fair trial, whether we or our game had the keener eyes; for if the snow-tracks gave us a hint where to direct our survey, the fugitives were quite aware that we were hanging on their rear; and the three pairs of trained and skilful eyes, scanning every rugged "neuk" of the forward ground, were well matched by three pairs as watchful and wary, noting every moving speck from behind, rendered more distinct by the weary waste of snow.

Twice the skulkers attempted concealment, their first retreat being found out by my son, and the second by myself. Both times, however, they had an eye on us first, and, instinctively warned by our bearing, moved on again with quiet and cautious step.

"They'll no stop noo till they get as far as the agle's nest forenent Corrynge," quoth the keeper, while we doggedly determined not to let them off while there was daylight.

This wood, a straggling patch of alder and hazel in the gorge of a rocky corrie where the eagle and raven built, was at the extremity of our shooting beat. There was still another stiff climb to it, so, despatching the keeper and retrievers to follow the course of the burn on the low side of the scrubwood, my son and I leisurely scaled the mountain for the high passes. We calculated that the keeper would require half an hour before getting to the far end of the wood, and fully an hour must elapse ere he could drive the roes forward to our passes on the near side. These passes were some hundred yards apart, and I was dreamily sauntering to mine when I stumbled on the tracks of our game. In a moment I saw they were shirking the wood, and evidently bent on topping the mountain, most likely with the intention of regaining their former ground. A more cunning manœuvre could not have been planned, and had it not been for the tell-tale snow, it would have been completely successful.

Briskly following up the "spoor" to the first fair look-out, I soon detected the three resting at the high corner of the wood, but without having entered it. They were as yet distant, but their still watchfulness, and the equality of the ground, made it impossible to stalk them. To my surprise and pleasure, a low whistle from the adjacent height revealed my son's head peering also at the roes. He had noted my change of course, and at once suspecting the

cause, had actually seen our game before I did. There now seemed a fair prospect of success; for by placing him above on the outer shoulder of the hill, and creeping on them myself from below, the deer would be very likely to cross within reach of the high gun.

During the whole time these hunting tactics were going on, the roes, with the exception of turning their heads now and then to look and listen, kept perfectly motionless, and I was first made aware that my comrade had turned their flank by the united eyes and ears of the listeners being raised in the same direction. Instantly aware of their danger, they marched with deliberate caution round the base of the hillock on the other side of which was the gun, and again were safe from the snare. Sharper-eared than Indians, they had heard stealthy footsteps on the crusted snow, and fairly circumvented their pursuers by this masterly double. The snow which had revealed them made amends by being the abettor of their escape; and it seemed as if the white carpet spread on the mountain by the skies disdained to have its purity sullied by the red blood of the victims which itself had betrayed.

Scarcely had the three roes flitted from the high ground above me, when the keeper and retrievers rose from the hollow underneath. His hawk eye had caught a glimpse of the guns on the hillside, and seen that we avoided the passes; and profiting by this discovery, he had followed in the wake, until he too

perceived the cause. Unable, however, to find out our plan of approach, he had prudently kept himself and dogs in hiding until the deer made their wary exit.

A better illustration of the power to compel success which knowledge of the sport gives the roe-hunter I have seldom had the pleasure to record. Here were three men left entirely to their own resources, and none of them made the slightest mistake. At parting, they all made sure that their game had taken shelter in the wood. These deer at first were half a mile distant from the nearest gun, and yet all three hunters, though far separated, detected them and marked their last dodge, while they themselves had no idea that even one spy had witnessed their cunning.

The short winter day was fast wearing out, but the pursuers' hopes were as strong as ever. The roes had been scarcely able to feed all the forenoon, and they no doubt felt confident that the last clever trick on the hill-peak had fairly entitled them to a supper. We were therefore quite convinced that they would settle to the evening meal at the first convenient halting-spot.

Giving his gun to the keeper, my son scouted forward with a telescope, and from screen of rock or tree scrutinised the hiding corries or scrubby patches which might possibly shelter our game. Crawling on hand and knee to the pinnacle of a wide look-out, we saw his attention fixed. Up goes the glass, to

remain steady for a few seconds, when it was shut up with a satisfied jerk, and he descended on all-fours. Before a word was spoken I felt sure the chase was at length happily safe.

The three roes were greedily eating among some stunted birches skirting a mountain brook, which, from the direction of the wind and the lay of the feeding-ground, could not have been more aptly placed. Leaving the keeper with dogs and telescope on the top of the mound, the shooters mapped out so wide a flank movement as to prevent the possibility of being either seen or winded by the quarry, now at last careless and secure.

The various eccentric turns and doubles of our game had again placed us close to the spot where we first found them at noon, and with so fair a prospect of coming to close quarters at the end of the day, no wonder that the fourth unsociable buck was quite overlooked. Scarcely had we quitted the keeper and dived for concealment among the rugged peaks and scaurs of the mountain-face, when "the solitary" burst from his lair among the whins right athwart our course; but scarcely had he got into his stride when a shot from my son's gun paralysed the fleet limbs that had almost saved him, and rolling over the crag, he lay powerless at its foot.

Our first act was to cast an eye on the look-out. There he was, steady as the rock he leaned on, neither the shot nor the fall of the roe having slackened for

an instant his attention from the watch we had set him. Our deer was soon despatched, cleaned, and hung on the nearest tree. We then pointed in the direction of the birches. A nod from the scout gave confidence to our stalk, being a well-understood signal that the trio had not been moved by the shot.

Thoroughly acquainted with the ground, the younger sportsman took position on line, but considerably beyond the birches where the deer were feeding; while the elder took advantage of a hillock about a hundred yards below, and close to the burn scaur.

A slight motion of my cap warned the keeper to come on. He first slipped out of sight for a little time, and began to whistle and speak to his canine accomplices, gradually emerging, as if accidentally, into view, having exactly the appearance of a shepherd "wearing" his flock. Dozens of times, we well knew, the roes had witnessed this operation, and were quite callous to it; so when the man now wheeled to the right, then to the left, but always nearing them as if by chance, the creatures were as easily herded as three "harvest hogs." They strayed slowly down the burn, and I was first aware that they were close upon my hiding-place by a head peering over the mound within pistol-shot of the muzzle of my gun. Anxious for a right and left, I was loath to fire until the three had topped the hillock, so the rejected head caught sight of its contemner, and ducking back warned the others, when they all scampered away.

I was on the hillock-top in an instant, but an unfortunate dip in the ground hid them until nearly out of reach, when I fired and struck the rear one bounding straight from me. At full pitch of their speed, the now terrified creatures dashed past the high gun, a long cross-shot. The leader fell dead, but the others, scared anew, swerved down hill, only allowing the second barrel time for a distant snap at the one I had before struck. The pair rushed down the burn's bank, one of them crossed, and immediately showing on the other side, darted up the hill at full stride; why the other lagged behind, we were at no loss to guess.

There was no dispute about the lurking-place of the wounded roe. Without a word we at once began the search, and found him at the very spot we anticipated. He was standing sideways at seventy yards from my feet, when I fired and dropped him on his side. He rose, and struggling down the steep, was quickly pulled down by my favourite retriever.

The dusk was now merging into darkness, the chase having lasted from high noon till past five o'clock. Weary and hungry, with a heavy roe slung upon each of our shoulders, and a long, rough, dark journey home, I will nevertheless make bold to assert that a more "heartsome" or a merrier one never was taken.

After the many splendid roe-hunts I have followed, both in former and in later years, it is my firm conviction that gun-fanciers can only undervalue this

sport from lack of knowledge. No doubt deer-stalking is both interesting and exciting to a tyro even from the first. He has the whole open panorama spread before him, and a sort of hazy, mystified conception of the plan of operations. Above all, he is encouraged by the stalker (in whose hands he is a mere puppet) with the probability, nay, almost certainty, of a fair rifle-shot at a noble hart. Very different is the pursuit of the roe. The shooter is, *or ought to be*, left to his own unaided powers, and many a blunder will he perpetrate, and many a hard day's work undergo, before he acquires the skill to warrant success. Confidence, of course, grows in proportion to the skill; but many sportsmen give up heart ere they have gained either, and naturally stigmatise "the following of the roe" as "dull work," and point perhaps to the few wretched specimens they have slain out of season as evidences that roes are equally unsatisfactory both when hunted and on the table.

I have been assured by a Fife proprietor that roes are migratory in the border counties. They come down, he said, from the Highlands in numbers during severe weather, returning to their hills again when the storms abated, exactly like deer. In my Highland shootings, however, I never noticed any decrease of roes when the winters were at their roughest; and had there been an exodus from my woods I must have perceived it, as I always knew well before Christmas what roe-deer were on the ground.

One of the most curious sporting incidents I ever knew in connection with roes happened in 1869 in the near wood of Ballimore. My son and the game-watcher were ferreting there with an Italian grey-hound, very expert at coursing rabbits. When the ferrets were searching the holes, Myrtle ran off on a warm track, but soon apparently brought her game to bay. Presently she gave a yell of pain and rushed back, pursued by a female roe, which overtook her within thirty yards of the ferreters, striking her such a pounder on the back that it left its mark for a week afterwards. The next day, when again after rabbits in the same wood, the little dog set full cry after one; but immediately the grunt of the doe rang through the trees, and Myrtle appeared flying before her in abject terror, taking refuge with the rabbiters, the roe dodging close round them, showing every sign of fury.

The most extraordinary part of the whole was, that several days afterwards, when the dog sprang a rabbit at the far end of the wood, the moment the doe heard her bark, it came bounding a full mile to where it heard the sound, while Myrtle, terrified by the roaring and crashing of the bushes, dashed back to her protectors at high-pressure speed. Of course the doe had her fawn in that wood; but such fierceness in its defence showed the surpassing power of maternal instinct, which had so completely changed the nature of the timid roe.

SEAL-SHOOTING.

"No man," says the old Highlander, "has any right to a hunter's badge who has not killed a red-deer, an eagle, a salmon, and a seal." Some also include the wild swan; but this last test of Highland sportsmanship seems scarcely fair, as the hooper is a cosmopolitan bird of passage, frequenting in hard winters most of the undisturbed pieces of water in the United Kingdom. Although the lonely moor lochan is a favourite resort both of Bewick's and the common wild swan, there are also large tracts among our wildest mountain districts where they are never seen, or even heard of. I should therefore be inclined to reckon the hooper as a more correct criterion of skill in an English fenman with mud boots and tarpaulins, than in a brogued and kilted Gael.

The killing of red-deer and salmon has been of late years so simplified by preservation, and by artificial modes of sporting, that even the Cockney who

possesses the talismam (money) will very soon be made free both of the forest and the river. What would the ancient hillman have thought of forests where the deer were nearly as tame as sheep, and so numerous as to be dwarfed both in size and antlers? With what contempt would he have growled his guttural at the sunk fences of the forest, and the boat-fishing of Loch Tay and the Tweed, when both are so crowded with spring or autumn fish that the veriest greenhorn could not escape hooking them!

This may be called the luxury of sport, but it is not the pleasure of it, for certainly our best pleasures must all be worked for and earned; at all events, these lazy and luxurious modes of deer and salmon murder were never contemplated by the Celt, who, in granting his diploma to a mountain hunter, deemed a single head of the famous four quite sufficient to entitle him to it.

Preserving, the chief means of bringing down to the level of almost any aspirant two of the four exploits required for a hunting degree, has, by driving it into remote fastnesses, made a third—viz., the death of an eagle—tolerably difficult to compass. As to the last on the list, let any one try to bag a seal under the most favourable auspices, and he may find the task less easy than it appears. I say "bag one" in place of shoot one, for most parties who have made the attempt with their rifles assure you they have been the death of many seals. On pressing the

point, you are informed that they all sank on receiving the fatal bullet, and that the defunct monsters are rotting under the waves.

For my own part—except of those struck through the body on land—I have little faith in the death of seals thus suddenly submerged. When hit on land, if the shot is not a header, they are very likely to flounder into the sea and sink in deep water before you can possibly get hold of or trace them. But all swimming seals, if hit at all, are shot through the head, and immediately spread out on the surface, giving ample time to row up and seize a flipper. When the shooter has no boat, and does not possess the assistance of a large retriever dog, he should never fire at seals unless in places where, if killed, they can be recovered when the tide ebbs.

The sight of seals is not quick, but their other senses of scent and hearing are most acute. In stalking, either from land or water, they are more difficult of approach than deer; and in a calm day the creak or splash of an oar instantly puts the basking shoal on their guard, when they roll helter-skelter into the brine. As they can wind you at a mile's distance, coming on them to windward is out of the question; for on the scent warning that the enemy is dangerously near, they shuffle from the rocks into the safety of the deep. Although long aware of threatened danger, they are often too lethargic to flee until it really becomes imminent; but this laziness

never tempts them to be so foolhardy as to risk their life.

A dead calm is, of course, best for seal-shooting from a boat, but a *favourable* breeze is an advantage, should the shoal be sunning themselves on the rocks; in which case, when afloat, always try to land and stalk from the shore. If from the direction of the wind or other obstacles this be impracticable, the shore chance from a boat is frequently an indifferent one, but the shot at the head when they come up after *the first dive* is almost certain to be point-blank.

A boat for seals should be light, and should draw as little water as possible. For this purpose, and to prevent rocking, the build must be broad, short, and flat. Frequently you have to pole through shallows only a few inches deep, while now and then dragging your shallop over an isthmus may be the only means of securing an excellent chance. As dead seals always lie on their backs at the bottom, their white bellies may be seen at a considerable depth. A strong cord with very large hooks and lead attached is, therefore, a most useful appendage to fish them up.

The monster ocean seals were rare in Loch-na-Gaul, but I have detected one or two about the entrance of the loch, always, however, shy of trusting themselves within bullet-range, and shunning the parts of the coast or the rocks where they might possibly be surprised. In the outer Hebrides these prodigious creatures are tame enough, and roam along the shores,

the tyrants of these wild seas. I saw the skin of one, shot off the Colonsay coast by a nephew of the then Lord Justice-General, which weighed 30 stone. It unexpectedly elevated half its body out of the water, close to the young sportsman, when he shot it through the lungs.

One fine September day, when walking with a friend on the south shore of Loch-na-Gaul, fourteen Arctic seals came racing past close to land. They jumped and gambolled over each other like boys at leap-frog, making a splash in the sea that gave notice of their advent a good way off. After coursing some distance in this boisterous style they settled on a rock, and by stalking we got within rifle-range; but not having a rifle, we were fain to content ourselves with a survey through the telescope—the first and last sight I ever had of these rare visitors from the Polar seas.

Even a quick eye requires practice ere it becomes expert at distinguishing basking seals on the rocks. They are so like tufts of sea-ware or detached stones both in shape and colour, that the uninitiated may have a dozen ranged at no great distance, yet never perceive one. The smallest suspicious object, however, at once arrests the attention of an experienced seal-shooter, and he instantly fixes the glass to watch for a curve of the tail or a bend of the head. Like wild-fowl and deer, when you detect the prey *before you are yourself perceived*, success is half attained; but

this far sight and keenness of eye can only be arrived at by long use, and is one of the brightest feathers of the hunter's cap.

A reef of rocks near the head of Loch-na-Gaul, although completely submerged at high tide, begins to show itself at quarter ebb, and at low water it expands into considerable islets. This group is the favourite drying ground of seals in summer, and the nursery where they rear their young. Every calm, hot day, when the islets are left bare and quiet, the large heads of the female seals, each followed by a little head, oftener by a pair no bigger than cricket-balls, float about the tiny bays, while the old males sun themselves luxuriously on the shelving rocks. Whenever this dry sunny weather prevented salmon-fishing in Loch Baa, the coble was carted from the fresh to the salt water loch, and seals substituted for salmon.

After a sultry fortnight towards the end of June, I noted with the telescope a flock of seals ranged like sheep along the centre rock of the group. A short time before, a new (Henry) rifle had been forwarded; what an opportunity to handsel it! The boatman was summoned, the rifle unpacked and loaded, without even a pluff of powder to spoil Mr Henry's "luck." A high rock of the nearest islet, where I landed, screened us from the herd, but they were beyond rifle-range, and there was no possibility of a closer approach. My tactics were soon fixed. Taking post under a rock close to the sea, I made the man unmuffle the

oars, and, keeping out of view, to pull away with as much noise and bustle as he could. The success of this manœuvre depended entirely on rousing the inquisitiveness of the sleepers. No sooner was the sound of the oars heard so near than the whole troop wriggled into the water, and two of the largest sailed past my rock at 80 yards' distance, peering curiously round for a sight of the boat. Selecting the moment when his poll was my target, I fired, and one of the monsters lay stretched on the sea. My second barrel was ready for his companion, which of course had dived, but *his* curiosity being satisfied, he never reappeared. The boatman obeyed my signal at his utmost speed, and all but upset the coble in dragging the seal on board. It was a male, and weighed 9 stone.

The weather continuing calm and warm, the same shoal a few days after settled on one of the further rocks; but the look-out was too open to permit of our cheating them again, so there was nothing to be done but raise the long sight. I fired at three in line, and must have hit a pair of them, for we traced two tracks of blood to the sea, entering it from opposite sides of the rock. The surface was also covered with their fur, but the water was far too deep to allow any hope of detecting them at the bottom if dead.

The seals were now getting shy of these rocks, but a burning day again enticed them to try a *siesta;* this time, however, they cunningly chose a bare ex-

posure, *all but* safe from surprise. On taking a survey with the telescope from the mainland, I arranged a plan by which we had a prospect of getting within 150 yards, but the operation was both difficult and tedious. By landing on the outermost islet, and carrying the coble right across into a creek dividing the first from the second reef of rocks, we could pole down to the shelter of a large stone, which might enable the stalker, by a wet crawl among the sea-weed, to reach the distance I had calculated for a chance. A crew of four was needed for the land transport of our skiff; but to effect this *quietly* over slippery rocks, although the turning-point of our strategy, was its most trying part. The moist sea-ware caused a few false steps among the rough rocks, but its softness prevented these stumbles from being heard by the seals, so the coble was safely lodged in the creek. It was quickly pushed down this latch, when I had to crawl flat a little way among shingle and sea-weed in order to reach the nearest point for the shot.

After carefully noting the postures of the unsuspicious but scattered flock, being unable to get two in line, I put up the 150-yard sight and selected one of the nearest. Instantly I saw and heard the ball strike my mark true to the aim. Its companions dashed into the sea, but the wounded seal rolled about on the sand, and then struggled after them. When in the water, in place of only the head, the whole disabled shoulder rose above the surface, and the dives

were short and laborious. My boatmen, making sure of their prize, pulled with all their might, but in mid career an oar snapped, and there was no spare one. With the stump of the oar they followed the path of blood, and every time the creature came to the top for air the sea was dyed red all round. Had I and my rifle been aboard I could with the greatest ease have sent a ball through its head before the air-supply was pumped out by the death-struggle, when it would have floated till we pulled up. Even with a pair of whole oars there was every likelihood of getting hold of the prey alive; but by lamely following it with an oar-stump the creature bravely fought on till it died, and then, quite empty of buoyant air, disappeared at once in deep water. For the truthfulness of my narrative I have entered into these details, but must acknowledge that such casualties in seal-shooting fully counterbalance its pleasures.

This reaching of them when they felt so secure, and the smell of their comrades' blood, made the *phoca* troop shy of their rocks for some time. Before they again dared risk the pleasure of a bask, copious rain enticed us back to Loch Baa and the salmon, and it was the beginning of August ere I had another opportunity at seals.

The Garmony farmer had complained of a deer injuring his ripening crops, so to please him we came over to Scalastal for a range of Garmony wood. After an early breakfast the shepherds and dogs were sent

forward to the further end of the covert, and I was loading my rifle and about to follow, when one of them ran back to tell us that a seal was resting on a submerged stone in the Sound, opposite the farm gate. He had detained the deer-hunt until he knew whether the rival claimant for the contents of my rifle would be first honoured. My son and the grieve went to reconnoitre, and reported that the seal was more than 200 yards from the gate. The stone was some three feet under water, and the creature, by resting its hind flippers on this platform, was standing upright in the sea, the head presenting even less of a mark than if the seal had been actually swimming. It was impossible to get closer than the gate, which, however, gave the advantage of a fine rest.

I always like shooting ball at objects in water, as a man is at once aware what kind of shot he has made. In this instance I did not expect to hit, but determined in the face of four witnesses to go as near as possible to my aim. I never fired with more deliberate calculation, but own I was nearly as surprised as the onlookers when the animal stretched on the surface dead. There was a rush by the two fleetest of our party for the rickety skiff; but long ere it was possible to pull round, I had the mortification to see my prize turn on its back and sink. I directed the rowers to the very spot, but although there were two pairs of as sharp eyes as ever scanned the deep, they could see nothing white at the bottom. On coming

into the skiff I at once perceived that there was no possibility of detecting the object of our search, except at the lowest ebb of the tide.

Our interrupted deer-hunt was again resumed, but there being neither hoof nor horn to delay us in Garmony wood, we had plenty time to be at the seal again by the turn of the tide. After launching the skiff and placing a shepherd to direct our course from the shore, my son, the grieve, and I endeavoured to find the resting-stone, now confounded with several others; but an unfortunate breeze[1] so obscured and hindered the search, that we had gone round and over the white mark three times before my son called out, "I see him." With difficulty backing the boat so as to keep sight of the creature for the few seconds required to cast off my coat and shoes, I plunged into the sea, and at the first dive caught hold of the hind flippers and raised it to the boat-side. Had we been provided with our seal-grappling apparatus (left at Glenforsa), from the roughness of the water and the strength of the wind, the task would have been both more lengthy and precarious. The seal was a female between 7 and 8 stones weight.

Late in the season, when the colder days had

[1] When wind ruffles the surface of the sea, a plain tube to fit the face, with plate-glass at the lower end, will greatly help to detect submerged seals. Its length should be four feet and a half, by half a foot diameter, and the glass end heavily weighted, to make it sink. It is, however, a lumbering concern, and would hardly repay the seal-shooter the trouble of its carriage.

thinned the Loch-na-Gaul rocks of their floundering visitants, my eldest son, who had been absent all the seal season, and was anxious to bag one, had the fishing-coble again transplanted for a day or two from Loch Baa to the salt water. He took post on one of the islets, and in orthodox style, Hythe position, hit his game fair through the head, swimming fully 100 yards off. This seal, however, did not require either a dive or the grappling-hooks, as I managed to get hold of and drag it into the skiff before it settled and sank.

The instinct of these amphibious creatures seldom allows them to be surprised far from the sea. On rocky coasts, where the water deepens suddenly, only a few land-shuffles are required to enable them to take the plunge. Flat sandy beaches, where the tide ebbs rapidly, may sometimes deceive them; but even there the look-out is too good to give any chance of a shot. I have watched them in the sandbanks of Sligo Bay, on the west coast of Ireland, and I have seldom seen *single* seals, except close to the water. Now and then the group allowed the sea to recede pretty far, but they never *all* slept; one or two sentinels were always on the alert, and at the most distant approach of danger, there was a general scramble to the sea. Two of my friends and I tried them with deer-toils, but they always avoided the snare. Occasionally a very young one was left high and dry; but this also happens on rocky coasts, even within a few yards of the water.

A party of seal-shooters placed one of their number on a narrow point of rock surrounded by deep water. As there was nothing to hide him, he stood bolt upright, expecting a stray chance at a passing seal. When his companions had rowed away, they were followed by a large seal, which all of a sudden spied the solitary being on the rock. Instantly wheeling about, it made for him at its utmost speed. His friends, suspecting the monster, shouted to warn him, but he thought they only meant to apprise him of a fine chance; he therefore allowed it to come quite close, and coolly shot it dead. It was a female in defence of her young; and had he failed in his aim, she would most likely have toppled him over the narrow ledge, and drowned him in the deep water. He said, that if he had known his risk, he would in all probability have missed.

Glass, the boatman who attends my wild-fowl excursions on the Firth of Forth, at North Berwick, had an enormous blue Russian water-dog. He was a very ferocious brute, and the most resolute dog in the water I ever saw. I have often admired his thirty-feet leap off the pier into the sea. He came as near to the amphibious as a dog well could. Point to any floating object, however distant, and he bounded out of the boat, and made for it like a shark. One of the smaller species of seal, called by fishermen the sea-dog, was watching the boat; Glass pointed to it, and out bounced rough Blue, determined on making a

capture. Instead of sheering off or diving, the enemy met him half-way, when the dog seized like a vice. For a second or two the battle was fierce on the top of the water, but when the seal dived, nothing was to be seen but the stream of bubbles where the combat was raging below. This lasted so long that poor Jack Russ was given over for drowned. At last he came to the surface in so forlorn a plight, that he had to be lifted into the boat. So high was the courage of this dog, that he would have gone at another seal as readily the next day, and fought him as fiercely too. Glass offered to sell him to me for £2, but as he was only a machine to fetch fowl out of the water, and not otherwise well trained as a retriever, I declined him. He was soon after sold as a watch for a wood-yard.

The old male seals fight as savagely as deer fc the females, and cut and mangle each other fearfull in their encounters.

CAPERCAILZIE - SHOOTING.

NEVER having had an opportunity of firing at the wood-grouse, I borrow from my eldest son's notes the following record of two or three days' sport with these magnificent birds.

"By the kind permission of a Perthshire friend (the proprietor), he went to Lude to try for capercailzie to complete the grouse family of our collection. The flight of this bird on first starting is somewhat peculiar —decidedly trying to the skill of a sportsman—as, resting hidden within a few feet of the top of the spruce firs, he usually descends like a cannon ball to within a short distance of the ground, and then, having got way on, gradually rises to the height of the tops of the trees. As these spruce firs are so close to each other, the shot is almost always a snap, confined to about ten or fifteen yards of open ground. The time to pick it, if possible, is when the bird steadies itself

for the forward flight, after having made the dow
ward swoop.

"With a keeper on either hand, the black fir-wood
were ranged by sections, the crisp shining snow, how
ever, giving the birds early notice of the approach
the party. During two days the woods were searche
in vain, for although often seen, and once or twic
within fair distance of one of the keepers, they alway
eluded the gun—the only shot obtained being a righ
and left at roe-deer, on the second day, securing both
On the third, the sportsman was at last successful i
dropping a magnificent cock with No. 4. Althoug
very anxious for a mate, not another chance at eithe
cock or hen could be obtained."

Next winter he again tried the same pinewood, an
had the satisfaction of bringing down another cock a
two old hens in finest feather.

From the windows of Garth, in Glenlyon, I u
to watch these noble birds congregated on the oppo
bank of the river every morning. Black-game w
often feeding with the capercailzie. In the even
too, coming home from my walk down the gle
often noted about a dozen black-game attended al
by one capercailzie cock. Now and then he g
peck at an old black-cock, who always gave
but the capercailzie was not otherwise overbe
In spring, no doubt, this cock would have this
of grey hens, and the hybrids so often shot
would be the result.

Within the last few years I have examined two of these crosses, one being shown to me by Small the bird-stuffer.

I may remark here that Small has put up my son's American collection with great skill and taste.

GROUSE AND BLACK-GAME SHOOTING.

GROUSE-SHOOTING, when the season begins, and our moors are thronged by ardent sportsmen from all parts of the kingdom, although requiring some tact and skill, is mere child's-play compared to what it becomes when the birds are wild and wary.

In the month of August or September, a few general rules may enable a good shot, upon a tolerable moor, to load his game-carrier. He should commence upon the farthest end of his range, giving his dogs the wind, and select some part of the moor, near the centre, to which he must endeavour to drive all his packs. His follower should be a good marker,[1] active and intelligent in comprehending his least signal, and always ready, when the dogs point, to place himself so as to prevent the birds taking a wrong direction. After

[1] In marking grouse, when you can no longer distinguish them from the brown heather, still let your eye follow their course, as the flapping of their wings when they light is much longer discernible than the rapid motion of their flight.

having skirmished in this way until about two or three o'clock, he may send for a fresh couple of his oldest and most experienced dogs, and, with the greatest care, begin to beat this reserved ground. If the day is favourable, and he has not strangely mismanaged, he ought to make bloody work. Should his range be along the steep side of a mountain, the birds are much less likely to leave the ground; when raised, they will probably (unless he is beating up and down the hill, which is neither an easy nor a good way) fly straight along the mountain-side, and the young grouse-shooter might suppose would drop down upon a line with the place they rose from. But no such thing: the pack, after getting out of sight, before lighting will take a turn, and fly a considerable way either to the right or left. The sportsman must judge by the wind,[1] the nature of the ground, &c., which direction they have taken: if he can see the way their heads are turned just when going out of sight, he may also form a shrewd guess; but if he does not find them on the one side, he must try the other. Should he have the whole of a detached hill, even if a small range, the birds are so unwilling to leave it at the beginning of the season that they will often fly round and round until he has completely broken them: no finer opportunity than this for filling the bag. Early in the season, when an unbroken pack is found at

[1] If high, grouse are very apt to fly with it, unless they have some stronger motive to the contrary.

evening feed, if the birds do not rise together, too much care cannot be taken to search the ground. They often wander a good way from each other, and after hearing a shot will lie till they are almost trod upon.

On some of our moors, grouse are as plentiful as partridges in the preserved turnip-fields of Norfolk: no man would then break his beat to follow a pack; but let him select the lowest and most likely ground, as near the centre of his range as possible, for his evening shooting. Grouse, and indeed all game, when raised, generally fly to lower ground, and when they begin to move about on the feed, are more easily found by the dogs; for which reason the evening is always the most successful time of the day.[1]

[1] Should the sportsman knock down an old cock and hen, and afterwards have the mortification to see the "squeaking" pack rise all round him, my advice is *not* to massacre them from the idea that, if left alone, they must *necessarily* die a more cruel death. I know most keepers will say that the young birds would starve, and I *was* of the same opinion; but I began to doubt the truth of it some time since, and a few years ago I had an opportunity of proving its fallacy. On a part of my moor where the birds were very scarce, I got a point, and after killing a brace was proceeding to pick them up, when the young pack rose, five in number, as decided "squeakers" as ever struck remorse into the callous heart of the shooter. I at once determined to ascertain whether poults left in so unprotected a state *must* die. So, after ranging the ground most carefully for a considerable distance, to be certain there was no other pack near, I left them undisturbed for eight days. At the end of that time I found and shot two of them, not at all fallen off in condition, and quite large enough to count in the day's return of the slain. These poults were not in company, but at a little distance from each other. It therefore appears to me that their great danger is from vermin, missing

The experienced grouse-shooter well knows how little it will avail him to attempt to find out the best part of a moor with which he is unacquainted, by a distant *coup d'œil*, or by theory, however plausible. On the same range the packs will be strongest and most numerous one year on the top of the hill, another on the brow, and a third on the flat at the foot, and this often without any assignable reason. A man who chooses his range by rule will be as likely to fix on the worst as the best. The only plan, supposing he has neglected to make himself acquainted with the ground before the 12th of August, is to find out from the shepherds where the packs are most plentiful, and concert measures accordingly. It often happens that, if the hatching-time is very rainy, the best packs may be found on the brow of a hill, from being less exposed to the wet; and in a dry sultry season the best places to range are the flats between the hills, or even the tops, if dotted with "peat-hags." [1]

the warning cry of the old birds when an enemy approaches. There can be no doubt of its being both cruel and destructive to the young brood to murder their protectors; but should the sportsman unfortunately do so, and not discover his mistake till too late, he had better give them the chance of escaping vermin than shoot them *out of humanity*, erroneously supposing that they cannot but die of starvation.

[1] Places where peats have been "cast" or dug out, in which the moss-water collects, and affords drink to the grouse. Sometimes these "hags" are formed by natural rifts in the bog, with a small red brook running through. This water is very unwholesome, and a man had better bear his thirst than drink it. The peat-stack is a sure index of these supplies of water, and can be seen at a considerable distance.

The very reverse, however, may be the case if the
are few mossy springs or peat-hags on the flat
top, and if the hillside is supplied with water f
the young packs by a constant succession of litt
brooks. It is impossible for a stranger to find o
these *minutiæ* without questioning those who are
the habit of travelling the hill, and who will be j
as likely to know *what is of more consequence—vi*
where the packs are to be found in the greate
abundance.

As to the ground *immediately* round him, a ma
accustomed to the moors can always tell whether it i
likely to harbour game; and let him be ranging th
top, the ridge, the brow, or the flat at the foot of the
hill, if he is surrounded by alternate patches of old
and young heather, interspersed with numerous green
mossy springs, or peat-hags half filled with water, he
is in full expectation of a point. If, on the contrary,
the ground is bare and the heather burnt, or if it be
growing in one unvarying crop of rank luxuriance, h
looks anxiously for a break, and almost grudges th
unflagging exertions of his persevering dogs. Still h
never gives up hope, and often finds game where
least expects it.

When grouse are raised on the top or brow
hill, the flight is generally much shorter than w
found on a level at the foot. In the latter case,
generally fly far out of sight; but if the grou
hilly and uneven, they often take a few do

turns, and drop down at no great distance. On the steep peak of the heathery hill, I have seen them fly quite round, and again settle not far from where they were first discovered. In fine weather, before the packs are strong, and especially before they have been much shot at, their flights are usually not nearly so long as they are afterwards; but even then, should the day be windy, they are generally rapid and uncertain. When this is unfortunately the case, they are so capricious in the choice of their refuge as often to baffle the most determined tramper of the moors.

Grouse are much more difficult to find in the middle of the day than in the morning and evening, when they move more about; but in sultry weather they lie quite still, except at feeding-time; and not having stirred perhaps for hours, the dogs may come within a yard or two before winding them. To procure shots at such times tries the mettle both of the sportsman and his dogs. During continued rain, they are apt to gather beneath the shade of a hillock, or in scaurs and ravines. To continue ranging is mere waste of time, until it clears, and the ground has dried a little; for to say nothing of the other miseries, the birds, even when found, will not run a yard in the wet heather, and will generally take wing at a long distance. When the weather is boisterous, they are very fidgety and wild, even at the beginning of the season. It is then easy to see who does and who does not understand anything of grouse-shooting. Every inequality of

ground must be taken advantage of. The sportsman should crouch as much as he can, wearing a drab-coloured cap, which will often take him five or six yards nearer his game than the lowest-crowned hat he can procure. If possible, he should always advance from lower ground, walking up any cracks or hollows in the moss. When this is skilfully done, he appears to the birds at a greater distance than when they see his whole figure prominently coming down upon them from higher ground. I have already said, that if you have reason to suppose the pack are on the side, or at the foot of a steep hillock, *only a gunshot in height*, the best plan to pop upon them within reach is to come straight over the top; but under other circumstances, this should never be attempted.

Most young shots are not content unless they are upon the moor by peep of day on the long-anticipated 12th of August. And what is the result? They have found and disturbed most of the packs before they have well fed, and one half will rise out of distance, and fly away unbroken. Had the moor been left quiet till eight or nine o'clock, fair double shots might have been obtained at almost every pack, and many would have been scattered for the evening shooting. It will generally be found that if two equal shots, upon equal moors, uncouple their dogs, one at five o'clock and the other at eight, and compare notes at two in the afternoon, the lazy man will have the heavier game-bag, and his ground will be in the best

order for the deadly time of the day, to say nothing of his competitor's disadvantage from having fruitlessly wasted his own strength and that of his dogs, when many of the packs would not allow him to come within reach. My advice, therefore, to the young grouse-shooter, is always to wait till the dew is dry on the heather. If he starts at eight o'clock, and travels the moors as he ought, there is time enough before dark to put his powers to the proof, however he may pique himself upon them. I do not mean to say he must run over the ground, but keep up a steady determined walk, up hill and down hill, without flagging for an instant, unless the dogs come upon the scent of game. Of all sports, grouse-shooting is the most laborious. None can stand a comparison with it except deer-stalking; and yet the veriest "soft," puffing and blowing at every step, may put off a whole day upon the moors—travelling them I will not call it—and boast after dinner that "he wonders how people can find grouse-shooting so toilsome and fatiguing; *fox-hunting* is much more so!"

There are a few rules which a man not accustomed to climb hills will find his account in observing, if he would escape the suppressed smile of derision which his flagging will be sure to excite from the sturdy hillman who carries his bag. One is, to eat a very light breakfast; another, to drink as little as possible—but especially no spirits and water. If you can hold out without drinking till your luncheon or

dinner-time, your thirst will never be very oppressive; but once begin, and the difficulty of passing a clear brook is very much increased. The provision-basket should only consist of a cold fowl or a few sandwiches, and a bottle of table-beer or light ale. When you again begin your exertions, make your attendant carry a bottle of strong tea, without cream or sugar, which will more effectually quench your thirst than a whole flaskful of spirits and water to correspond. Should any object to this "*tea-total*" system, a little fruit may be no bad substitute. When I first took out a licence, I thought the spirit-flask almost as indispensable as the powder-flask; but experience has since taught me that nothing more effectually expends the remaining strength of the half-worn-out sportsman than a few pulls at the liquor-flask, however diluted: he gains a temporary stimulus, which soon ends in complete exhaustion.

As the season advances, and the birds become strong on the wing, the difficulty of breaking the packs is tenfold increased, and the sportsman's energy and activity are doubly tried; for although he has not to endure the burning heat of August and September, yet his pace may with advantage be quickened, as there is less risk of passing birds; and he should also carry a heavier gun. Taking everything into consideration, a medium between the common fowling-piece and that recommended for wild-fowl shooting on the lochs will be found the most efficient. A gun

of this description ought to carry No. 5, or even 4, with the same regularity as a common gun would No. 7. Some fire very large shot among the birds, when they rise, in order to disperse them: this may often succeed, but it is a most unsportsman-like proceeding. The plan I always adopt is, first to select my ground for the evening, taking care that it is full of hillocks: grouse have a great liking to them, and when thus concealed their flights are much shorter. I then commence ranging my other ground as described; and when I get a shot, although the pack should rise at some distance, I select one of the leaders; and if it drop, the pack is far more likely to break, and the nearer birds are left for the second barrel.

Always cross the dog a good way ahead when he points, and cock both barrels; it is impossible to bring down your birds in crack style otherwise. Unless shooting in company, I generally have my gun cocked, and held ready to fire, when walking over ground where there is any likelihood of birds rising. This I only recommend to the experienced sportsman.

Never increase the size of your shot when the birds are wild, *unless with a larger gun.* Those who object to this additional weight, or who give their gun to be carried by a servant, will make but poor work at this season, as many of the best chances rise without a point at all. Stick to the last to scattered

birds: one broken pack at this time is worth a dozen others.

About an hour before dusk, be upon the hillocks with your most experienced pointers: if they have been accustomed to grouse-shooting at the end of the season, they will hunt round them with the greatest caution; and when they wind birds, if ever so slightly, will point and look for your approach. Suppose your dog, statue-like, on one of the hillocks,—watch the direction of his nose, walk rapidly and noiselessly round in the opposite direction, as it were to meet his point, and you will most probably come upon the birds within fair distance. Should the hillock be steep, and only about a gunshot in height, walk straight over the top; and if the grouse be, as is most probable, on the side or at the bottom, you are certain of a tolerable shot. Should you have broken any packs in the morning, and driven them here, you are very likely to get some excellent chances.

As the shades of evening close upon you, the birds will lie much better; many a capital shot have I got when I could scarcely see them. A very indistinct view of his object is quite enough for a good snap-shot who is accustomed to his gun; and I would not guarantee the success of any other when the season is advanced. In fact, you must be prepared for every shot being a snap at the beginning of the day, and many at the end. By always following the above directions, I scarcely ever, to the end of the season, came

home with less than two or three brace after a few hours' shooting, upon a moor where I used, in August, to average from fifteen to twenty in a whole day.

When a moor is regularly shot over, and the large packs thinned, grouse are less apt to flock early, which is often occasioned by several large packs joining company. Late in the season, before they are tamed by a frost, a windy day generally produces the heaviest game-bag to a good quick shot. When his dog points, the sportsman has generally a shrewd idea where to expect the pack, as they collect behind rocks and hillocks, most frequently on the lee side. They keep all together, so there is no danger of stragglers; and as they do not hear so well in windy weather, he may often pop upon them close enough for a capital right and left.

An indifferent or poking shot should choose a sunny calm day at this time of the year; for although birds rise at a longer distance, yet their flight is so much slower than during a breeze of wind, that the length of the shot *to him*, in both cases, would most likely be pretty much upon a par. Added to which, in windy weather, they are apt to fly as twisting and irregular as snipe.

In a breezy day, never range near those parts of your marches where the wind strikes fair from your own to the adjoining moor. If you do, most of the birds will fly out of your bounds, notwithstanding every effort to intercept them.

The Perthshire grouse are much smaller and darker in colour than those of Argyleshire. The West Highlander is of a beautiful rich red, and very large. Grouse are never so plentiful on the west coast, from the wet springs addling so many of the eggs. This deficiency in *quantity* is the reason of the superior *quality* of the Argyleshire birds,—it being a never-failing rule that, when ground is over-stocked, the creatures deteriorate. In the low corn districts, such as Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, and the border counties, the grouse are a very light brown, borrowing a tint from the stubbles on which they delight to feed. Snaring grouse in these counties on the "stooks," with wire no thicker than horse-hair, is a very common way of poaching. Forty or fifty are often taken at a time, during the period between the corn being cut and carried. All these birds are so light in the colour as more nearly to resemble partridges. But let us take the mountain from top to bottom, and admire the wondrous care of the Divine appointments. The ptarmigan, the colour of its snowy summit in the winter time, and of the grey granite rock in summer; the grouse, lower down, exactly like its own red-brown heather in the autumn; while the partridge,[1] which subsists upon the little patch of corn that skirts the moor, has the yellower shade of the stubble on its wing.

[1] These moor partridges, which spend much of their time in the heather, are of a darker colour than those of the Lowlands.

As the nights grow long, grouse take a far fuller evening than morning feed. In mid-winter their crops at dusk are as hard as drums. They seldom fill them in the mornings then. Black game also often content themselves with heather at this time, from scarcity of other food. Late in the year, both these birds sit best when evening feed begins.

No man ought to beat the same range oftener than twice a-week, as packs of grouse, after being dispersed, seldom all collect in the evening like partridges, but are often some time before they gather: the best days are those with a warm sun and light breeze. Cold wind and rain, after October, make them flock; and it is of no use to disturb them till it is fine again, when they disperse. You may expect good sport after the first black frost. A sort of lethargy seems to come over the birds: I have seen several in a day standing up, without an attempt at concealment, within forty yards—a rare opportunity for poachers and bad shots.

Many suppose that grouse change their ground with the changes of weather, and even lay down rules what parts of the mountain they frequent according to its variations. I have watched them narrowly for many years, and am firmly of opinion that they only shift to the longest heather on the lee side of any knolls near their usual haunts, when they want shelter from the sun, wind, or rain. When they become strong on the wing, and the weather is cold or

boisterous, they will shift from one mountain-face to its opposite counterpart, to avoid the cold and take advantage of the sunshine, provided the distance does not much exceed their ordinary flight. This, I think they never *willingly* do at the beginning of a season. I have likewise heard it asserted that grouse descend the hills to feed: this I also believe to be erroneous, and have no doubt that, at feeding-times, they only move to the first short sweet patch of young heather, the tender tops of which form their chief food during a great part of the year—except, indeed, in winter, when many of them come down to lower ground than they ever frequent at other times. The young poult eat the seeds of the various grasses and weeds that grow in the moors, and are particularly fond of sorrel. At the hatching time, the hen devours quantities of earth-worms with great avidity.

We hear many complaints from those who rent shootings about the scarcity of grouse. Plenty of absurd reasons are given for the decrease, and with some plausibility much blame is laid on the greed of stock-farmers. Having farmed the chief hill of my Mull shootings for the benefit of the game, I have some right to speak from experience. My conviction is, that though needy, ignorant creatures, *near the end of their lease*, may sometimes overstock their ground, no enterprising farmers would do so. They are well aware that fewer good stock pay better than a greater number of bad, besides having the ground in finer

order for next year. All animals, and fish too, either die or grow weedy when overstocked. Many of our modern deer-forests are ruined by overstocking, but sportsmen often care more for the number of shots than the quality of the deer. This won't suit the farmer's book on market-day, quality always paying better than quantity on the average.

When I rented the grouse-shooting on Kilmun hills, it was a curious but well-established fact, that if ten sheep more than the ground could keep were put on, the supernumerary ten were sure to die. The general rule, however, is, that they grow weak and deteriorate year by year, until the farmer alters his system. Any really able hill-farmer would rather understock than overstock his hills. This has always been my own plan, and I find my account in it.

In former years, when there were more black cattle and fewer sheep, no doubt grouse were far less disturbed and injured by stock; but so long as these nurseries for grouse, the deer-forests, continue in such vogue, the superseding of black cattle by sheep is in part atoned for. Had the grouse-grumblers complained that Highland farmers now keep more sheep, and fewer black cattle, than they formerly did, there would have been truth in the grievance.

If it is maintained that the increasing flocks of sheep, like locusts, consume the food formerly allowed to the grouse, and thereby starve them out, I must own I can hardly reconcile this view of the matter

with the facts I am about to state: 1st, No one will deny that the heather on the West Highland coast of Scotland is quite as good and luxuriant as that of the north or centre. 2d. The average sheep-stock of the three districts is pretty much upon a par—that is to say, the complement of sheep upon every hill is what that hill will support without detriment to the stock. Now, every grouse sportsman knows that the grouse in the north or centre Highlands of Scotland are immensely more numerous than in the watery west. To put it in another form,—a crack shot in the north, or in Perthshire, will sometimes bag from 150 to 200 brace. On our best-protected and best-managed moors in the West Highlands, an equally good shot will seldom score as high as fifty brace under every advantage. Now, may I ask what is the reason that the birds are so much more numerous in one part of the kingdom than in the other? It is not the want of food in the West Highlands; there is abundance of heath to raise and support three times the head of game, if the climate would only allow it. Protect as strictly as possible, and kill every rapacious bird and beast on the ground, there never could be half as many grouse reared in the west as in the north or centre Highlands; and the reason is, the humid climate prevents it.

When I rented Sonachan moors (about 8000 acres of as beautiful heather as ever man stepped upon), I engaged a game-protector, who for many years had served two as experienced and persevering grouse-

shooters as any in the north. This man came to me shortly before the 12th of August. He was amazingly charmed with the look of his new hills, and could not be persuaded that there were comparatively few birds on them. After the first day's shooting, his disgust was extreme. Standing on a commanding "knowe" at the close of our weary day, and sweeping his brawny arm in the direction of our well-travelled beat, "Weel, sir, if ye had sic fine feeding and breeding ground in the north, ony gentleman that could shoot and walk as ye've done the day wad kill his 150 brace, and no mistake."

Lessees of shootings are loud in their complaints of heather-burning—and with reason. Many of them paying high rents, and for short leases, their sport, during the whole term of their occupancy, may be quite ruined by reckless burning. Any good sportsman, however, ought to be aware that, if a moor was left to its natural unburnt luxuriance, the birds would be very apt to leave it for ground that had been burned. I once took a very good moor in Perthshire for five years. On my first arrival, one of the sheep-farmers had just consumed a long stretch of fine blooming heather. I forgave him, on promise of never burning again, except under my keeper's directions. For three seasons there were few birds on that part of my beat; but afterwards they gradually returned, and on the last "twelfth" of my lease I killed considerably more than the half of my day's

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BLACK-GAME.

[redacted]k-game do not pair like grouse [redacted]
[redacted]hen and young birds at the beginning [redacted]

[redacted] In the Appendix will be found a number of [redacted] times I addressed to the 'Field' on the [redacted] a, which nature soon corrects by disease.

market are now met by equally able tactics on the part of modern moor-watchers. It is surprising how easily the least signs of netting, snaring, pinioning the poults, &c., &c., are detected by an energetic, conscientious head keeper and his subs. One sympathises with the wonder of the French sportsman, when he demanded of the burly game-protector, "How it was possible to pickle these mountains?" "We pickle naething but sawmon here," was the grinning reply. "I know better; you peekle your deer and grouse as strongly as your salmon." Each walked off in dudgeon, thinking the other was laughing at him. A still more unlucky confounding of pickles and preserves was made by one of the foreign deputation to the Seceding Assembly, who prayed that "Dr Chalmers might long be pickled for the Free Church." A keen opponent of that great man's ecclesiastical polity, who had often found his powerful appeals not very easy to stomach, musingly muttered, "Hech me! but a piece pickled Chammers wad be ill to disgeest."[1]

BLACK-GAME.

Black-game do not pair like grouse; and shooting the hen and young birds at the beginning of the

[1] In the Appendix will be found a number of letters which at various times I addressed to the 'Field' on the subject of over-preservation, which nature soon corrects by disease.

season is a simple business.[1] You have only to make yourself master of the places they frequent. They may always be found near a short thick rush, easily seen on the moor, the brown seeds of which form the principal food of the young packs. When your dogs point near these rushes, and especially if they "road," you may be almost sure of black-game. The old hen generally rises first, the young pack lying like stones: no birds are more easily shot.

The old cocks, even in August, are never very tame: for although, where the heather or rushes are long and rank, they may lie tolerably well at first, yet even then they are sure to rise very high, and take a long flight, generally quite beyond your beat: they are sometimes found singly; at others, in small flocks from six to ten. Their food on the moor consists of cranberries; another berry, found in mossy

[1] Many gentlemen are now beginning to shoot the hens, observing the great increase of black-game and decrease of grouse in some districts. This may in part be attributed to the advance of cultivation; but I cannot help thinking the black-game have a good share in driving off the grouse—as I know of one instance where the former were killed off, and the latter again returned to their old haunts. I believe it is also more than suspected that the capercailzie, wherever they are introduced, have a great inclination to dispossess both. It is a curious fact, that the young capercailzie thrive better under the foster-care of the grey-hen than if left to their natural protectress. When a capercailzie's eggs are discovered, they are divided among several grey-hens, whose nests the keepers search out for this purpose. The grey-hens, however, will not sit upon them, unless some of their own eggs are also left. But when the young are hatched, they pay equal regard to both; and it is not until the capercailzie are fully grown that they drive away their step-mothers, who dread them as much as hawks.

places, called in Scotland the "crawberry;" and the seed of the rush before-named.[1] They, being very strong on the wing, have not the same reason as the young packs for keeping near their food, and are often found far from it, especially in the heat of the day; shelter from the sun being their chief object. There can then be no better place to beat for them than among thick crops of bracken. Should you find them in such good cover, they will often give you a capital double shot.

As the season advances, black-game are the wildest of all birds. Fair open shooting at them is quite out of the question. As they seldom eat heather, their food on the moors soon becomes scarce; they then much more frequent the stubble-fields and copses by the hillsides. You may often see twenty or thirty feeding together on the sheaves, when the corn is first cut; but they are exceedingly alert for the approach of an enemy. I have seen them doing the farmer as much injury as so many barn-door fowls. Your best plan then is to hide yourself among the sheaves, and wait for their feeding-hours. If you are well concealed, and have selected the proper part of the field, you may have an opportunity of killing a brace sitting with your first barrel, and another bird with your second.

As the fields become bare, and the days shorten,

[1] I shot a fine old cock in August 1840, whose crop was full of a yellow flower of the dandelion kind, very common on the moors.

they begin to feed three times—namely, at daybreal at noon, and an hour before dusk. To get a sho then is much more difficult. I have made a hole i the stone walls which enclose most of the Highlan fields, in order to shoot through it. I have als placed a bush on the top to screen myself when risin to fire; but they have such quick sight and acut hearing, both well exercised, when feeding on th dangerous ground, that I have found it a better pla not to attempt the sitting shot. My way is to crav as near the place where they are feeding as possibl and make my attendant and one of the farm-servan enter at each end of the field opposite, and come le surely down towards the birds; they are then almo sure to fly over your head, and give you an excelle double shot. Care must be taken, however, to asce tain that no sentinel is perched upon the wall, or c any high ground near, as there often is at the begi ning of the feed. Should there be, wait patiently t he joins the flock. I have also, by this method, oft got a capital chance at grouse feeding on the stubb when returning home in the evening from shooti ground on the Lammermuirs and in Selkirkshire.

In a country where there are few corn-fie you may get the best sport at old black-cocks judiciously beating the plantations on the sides the hills, especially if there are birch and alder them, the tender tops of which form a great part their winter food. They are still more likely t

On no part of the island of Mull does grouse-shooting come up to a fair average; and although one may often get a good day at black-game in the beginning of the season, they are still far less plentiful than on the mainland, and soon seek shelter in the tangled woods, where most of the shots are unsatisfactory snaps. Towards the end of autumn these woods and covers are much frequented by old black-cocks. If there are many trees of any size among them, pretty fair chances may be obtained by means of a slow, steady dog. When scared by the dog, an old black-cock is very apt to take refuge in the first tall tree, making a kind of *coo*, which may easily betray his roost. The dog, meantime, patiently watches, and so engrosses the attention of the bird as often to procure a tolerable chance. It is a good deal like stalking capercailzie; and as morning and evening are the best times, one or two of these shy birds may be bagged before beginning or after finishing a regular day's range in open ground. You require a knowing dog, such as would make capital work *against wind* by footing the birds. I have had dogs so thoroughly up to this work as to make a steady point from the foot of the birds, then circle round for the wind, and thus place the game between themselves and me. A fair shot is the probable result of these clever tactics.

Black-game and grouse are easily tamed; ptarmigan, I believe, never. The keeper of the pheasantry at

Rossdhu had a black-cock, a grouse, a partridge, and a pheasant, confined together. They agreed pretty well; and the grouse, being a hen, hatched two successive seasons. The first year the whole of this cross-breed died; but the next, with great care, a couple were reared. They were both cocks; and, when come to their full plumage in winter, were a blackish brown, something between the colour of a grouse and a black-cock. They were presented by my late father to the Glasgow Museums, where they may now be seen. I have given in the illustration an accurate likeness of that in the College Museum.

Before ending this subject, I may put gentlemen on their guard against two ways of poaching grouse and black-game, I believe not generally known. The first is, hunting the young packs, before the moors open, with a very active terrier or collie. If the dog understands the business, he will chop a great many in a day. On a moor in Roxburghshire, I saw a sheep-dog, accompanied by a young farmer, performing to admiration. I had the curiosity to watch their proceedings, until I saw the dog snap a young grouse quick as thought. The other plan is to set traps, on the peat-stacks, or in the green springs where the birds come to drink and to eat small insects. This last may be continued all the season. We often hear that these traps are set in the former case for hawks, and in the latter for carrion-crows.

They may be, but any one who understands the habits of grouse and black-game knows what birds they are most likely to catch; and if this way of destroying vermin is persevered in by the keepers, "the laird" will soon begin to find his grouse *minus* their legs.

PTARMIGAN-SHOOTING.

It is worth while to make an excursion to the rocky haunts of the ptarmigan, if only for the splendid views they command, and the strange novelty of the scene. Ben Lomond, Ben Vein, Ben Voirla, and indeed all that lofty range in the west, are inhabited by these solitary denizens of the mountain-top. Except for this additional motive, however, not many sportsmen would be tempted to ascend them for the chance of the few shots they would be likely to obtain. Some of the mountains of Ross-shire and Inverness-shire are far easier of access, and the birds much more numerous: as many as ten or twelve brace may there be bagged in a day. Not having had the good fortune to shoot upon them, I can only speak from my experience in the West Highlands. The sportsman who climbs any of the mountains I have named, and falls in with the ptarmigan, cannot fail to observe how well it harmonises with the scene.

Perched upon a ledge of the shelving rock, whic it nearly resembles in colour, its wild look seems contrast with the little dread it shows at the sig of man, who so seldom disturbs its craggy aboc They are even so stupid that, if stones are thro over the pack, they will sometimes crouch down, dread of their more common enemy, the eagle; a bewildered at the sound of the gun, suffer themsel to be massacred one by one. This experiment, ho ever, more often fails, when they all take w together at the first stone; and far from being slow as many suppose, they are quite as rapid in t air, or even more so, than grouse: they will al sometimes take as long flights, although their mo common way is to fly round the angle of a rock precipice, and immediately drop down.

I cannot better describe ptarmigan-shooting tha by giving an account of the first day I ever enjoyec this sport, of which I have a most perfect recollection and also of an expedition, in company with an Englis friend, now many years ago!

When fresh from school, the first year I took ou a licence, I went on a grouse-shooting excursion soo after the 12th of August. Having slept at th nearest farmhouse to the ground, I started at day break for the base of "the mighty" Ben Voirl where, I had been told, grouse were plentiful tha year. My guide was the game-preserver, a reclaime poacher, who had as quick an eye for a hare sitting

Ptarmigan in their usual attitude.

or a ptarmigan among the rocks, as ever peered from under a shaggy brow. After about three miles' very rough walking, we reached our destination. With eager hope I uncoupled my dogs, who soon came to a dead point; off went both barrels—it certainly was missing in good style!—not even a feather dropped for the exercise of my companion's ingenuity to hang a peg upon. All the excuse that his wit or wisdom could frame was—"You've made them leave that, at ony rate!" After two or three *equally successful* points, I began to wish myself well out of it; and, looking up to the stupendous mountain, asked if there was any chance of finding ptarmigan should we climb it. Having small hopes of my performance on wing, and knowing, from experience, that a sitting shot might thus be obtained, he caught at the plan, and we commenced our steep and toilsome ascent. An hour and a half brought us to the first shoulder of the hill, when all of a sudden he stopped, eagerness in every feature, and, pointing in the direction of a large rock, said—"If it wasna that I thocht it owre low, I would tak my oath that thing on the tap o' the rock is a ptarmigan." I now walked first, and, ducking down into a ravine, came out about sixty yards from our object. Immediately it took wing, and my gun was at the same moment discharged, with, I must confess, scarcely an attempt at aim. To my inexpressible delight, the bird dropped. Heedless of spoiling my dogs, I rushed up, and seized

my prize. After carefully wrapping its in tow, to prevent the blood from soiling and giving it in charge to my sharp-sigh proceeded for a fresh search.

My utmost hope now was to make ou but we toiled to the top of the mount seeing another bird. I had sufficient op admire the care and skill with which scrutinised every likely spot: passing ove ing cliffs by which we were surrounded superficial glance, he directed his chief the [illegible] or heaps of rock and ston [illegible] about. All at once I felt hi [illegible] upon my shoulder, the other han [illegible] these cairns not twenty yar [illegible] my eyes to the utmost, but [illegible] save the dull grey rock. His [illegible] and vented itself in loud [illegible] At last I caught si [illegible] and tail carried low, and col [illegible] that it might well have [illegible] stones—none but a pra [illegible] have discovered it. With [illegible] gun was raised—off [illegible] ptarmigan with a hoars [illegible] second barrel followed th [illegible] The bird flew rapidly round [illegible] with it my last lingering hope [illegible] difficulty in finding them, and impaired

even when found. So we retraced our steps with my solitary bird, which happily served to stop minute inquiries about the day's sport.

Some years elapsed before I again visited Ben Voirla, but in that time I had taken a leaf out of my instructor's book, and could also trust myself not to throw a chance away when the birds were discovered. I was now accompanied by a friend from the south —a very good shot, and particularly anxious to see and bring down a ptarmigan.

When we got to the foot of Ben Voirla, we found that there were two packs on what is called the second top, and were thus saved the trouble of scaling the highest. So, taking two young farmers as guides, we reached the ground after a stiff climb. On ranging one side of the mountain, just as we were turning round to the other, the dogs ran into a small pack, which jerked round an angle, and were out of sight in a moment. I knew their flight would probably be a short one, so began to look about with the utmost caution. My friend, quite a novice in this sport, had no idea of finding the game himself, and continued to hunt the dogs with great assiduity. We happened to be pretty near together when they again "poked up" a ptarmigan. Neither of us thought of each other, or the ordinary rules of shooting, but fired at once, and down came the bird. This was rather unsatisfactory, as the "honour and glory" belonged to neither. However, we determined

it should not happen again. I described what place the birds were most likely to haunt, and cautione against trusting to the dogs, which were quite unac customed to such ground; but finding my companio preferred his own plan, I left him, and commence my slow and wary search. At last I caught sigh of a ptarmigan upon the very ridge of the hill, abou thirty yards above me. It was in the same crouch ing attitude before described, and, had I attempted t put it up, it would have dipped out of sight in a instant. I was therefore obliged to shoot it sitting But the moment I fired, another flew straight ove my head, his hoarse croak proclaiming the cock o the pack! I had a fair shot, and down he dropped The first I killed being a hen, they made a capita pair for my collection.

I was now very anxious that my brother sports- man should have a good chance; and, joining company we reconnoitred the ground on every side without success. Only one bird was put up out of all distance, which my friend determined to follow; so, agreeing to meet at the foot of the hill, we took different ranges. Fortune again declared in my favour; for, just as I was scrambling with hand and knee up a steep precipice, a pack of four rose upon the very top, and flew into mid-air, just giving me time to steady myself, cock my gun, and get a distant shot, when one of them dropped into the gulf below. I sent my guide to fetch it, which he accomplished with some difficulty;

and then despatched him in quest of my less successful companion, with the injunction that, if he joined in pursuit of my game, the odds would be *three* to *one* in his favour.

I had scarcely got to the peak, where I thought it most probable my three fugitives would again take refuge, when I was overtaken by one of those bitter hail-showers which often fall on the mountains in early autumn; so, placing my gun in its waterproof cover, and my back, Fitz-James-like, against a rock, I impatiently hoped for the cessation of the storm. Scarcely had it begun to abate, when an alpine hare came curtseying past about eighty yards from my shelter, and then seated herself with equal grace,—as tempting a mark for a rifle as could possibly be placed. It was not to be resisted even with my small shot. So, slowly uncasing my gun, and taking *deadly* aim, I fired. Puss gave an active bound at this unlooked-for attack, and took her leave with far less ceremony than she made her *entrée*.

I had just reloaded, when my guide appeared with a breathless malediction on my gun. He had seen my friend going down the mountain, but quite beyond recall; and, when returning to me, had stumbled on the ptarmigan, most conspicuously perched on the top of a rock. He was in the act of taking his marks to know the place again, in the hope of finding me, when my shot abruptly put an end to his schemes. The birds were equally dissatisfied with the sound as their

four-footed ally of the crags, and made the same use of their wings as she did of her legs. It was now late, but as the man had some idea of where they might be, I could not resist the temptation of giving them one more trial. We had almost given up hope, when they a third time rose, very wild, fully a hundred yards off, from a knoll of moss where they were feeding. My time was now "up," so I descended the mountain well pleased with my day's sport, notwithstanding the mishap at the end.

The woodcut represents a ptarmigan in its common attitude, cowering under shelter of a stone; the other is perched upon the top of a rock—an equally characteristic situation.

A PTARMIGAN DAY.

On the west coast of Scotland the very name ptarmigan implies loneliness and grandeur. In the north where, from the greater prevalence of green stony ground, the birds become far more numerous, and the hills that allure them are more easily climbed and travelled, the association of this lonely denizen of the rocks with our sterner scenery is to some extent weakened. But on the western chain of the Grampians the very mountains themselves would lose caste both in romance and sublimity were their summits deserted by the alpine grouse.

So inaccessible are the breeding-places of the white grouse in the Western Highlands of Scotland, and so scanty is the stock of this game, that, always excepting shepherds, few of the natives have seen, and some never even heard of, such a bird.

"Ptarmigan ground" is therefore a most appropriate title for the magnificent cluster of mountains at the head of Loch Lomond, where every bald and rugged peak, capped with snow or shrouded in mist for half the year, has always nevertheless a scanty sprinkling of these lovers of desolation and contemners of the storm.

In these regions the very valleys and thoroughfares are lonesome and dreary; and despite the crowd of summer tourists that throng its banks, the otter fearlessly threads the Falloch when travelling between Lochs Lomond and Dochart. Sometimes, when watching the twilight flight of ducks, I have been startled by his peculiarly modulated whistle in the still bends of the river; and an isolated rock close to the highway is known as the "otter's inn," from his resting a day there when changing his fishing-quarters.

The numerous detached heaps of rock and stone scattered along the hillsides, or grouped in fantastic outline on the brow, are each occupied by a family of discreet badgers, whose use-and-wont title is never disturbed, except when the mountain-fox in spring takes forcible possession of the lower cairns, where the

abundant stock of blue hares affords her voracious litter an unfailing supply.

The great abundance of these blue hares frequently allures a pair of golden eagles from the opposite hills of Corrynge. They are the only ones of this district, and always choose for their eyrie some one or other of the cliffs between Glenfalloch and Balquhidder. The quietness and extent of the hunting-ground have also emboldened the peregrine to build yearly on the confines; while a male hen-harrier constantly swept over the heather during the last year of my lease.

Such are the wild fauna prowling over the rugged frontier of the Glenfalloch shootings, the background being filled up by the ptarmigan hills. They are four in number—Ben Duchray, Ben Oss, Ben Loy, and Ben Achly. The two centre ones are the "surest find," and generally have one or two packs of white grouse every good breeding year. For these few birds there is such an amount of rocky and (unless to an experienced hillman) dangerous ground to be searched, that even with trained ptarmigan dogs, and working them hard to boot, many an enthusiastic sportsman may return without having stumbled on a single bird all day.

Certainly it is not mere love of shooting that can give excitement or piquancy to a wearisome West Highland ptarmigan range. Strip it of its scenery, labour, difficulty, and it is nothing; but a few brace

of ptarmigan, with these adjuncts thrown into the scale, would outweigh, with every true lover of Highland shooting, the heaviest game-bag gathered with little trouble, sometimes even with little fatigue.

To sally forth alone on a distant and toilsome ptarmigan expedition had a peculiar charm for me. One could thus realise a modicum of the self-reliant independence, — nay, even some of the endurance of hardship, — at once the unfailing characteristic and the boast of the rovers among the American backwoods.

Even a successful day at white grouse on the West Highland districts never produces an inconveniently heavy game-bag. An attendant, therefore, is little needed, except to give advice,—which a man who knows the nature and habits of this bird, has a quick and keen eye, and a brace of steady dogs used to the sport, is far better without.

In the year 1862, grouse had bred badly (owing to late snows) on the Kuron, the wild stretch of moorland I have just sketched, and which forms the principal range of the Glenfalloch shootings. My second son and I had good sport, however, on the two smaller beats, averaging from twenty to thirty brace a day during August and the first weeks of September. The weather also had been very propitious till then, when it broke, and a fair day was a rarity. Wishing to spare the Kuron, and having shot down the full complement that the other moors would bear, I had for a fortnight been

looking wistfully towards the ptarmigan hills. Each morning they were enclosed with fogs, and the weather itself was aptly described by an old Highland "kimmer" as "shoory, shoory, shoory, an' rain between."

On the 11th September, a rather too clear morning determined me to risk my "ptarmigan day." I had at that time two excellent rock-dogs; one a black setter with indomitable pluck to search every stony cairn—his assistant an old pointer of famed pedigree, and staid as Ben Loy itself.

With a game-pouch slung over my shoulder and the trusty canine couple at heel, I left Glenfalloch door before eight o'clock. A short walk along the highroad leads to the rough steep path winding over the first height. Surrounded by natural strips of wood, and skirting the Kuron burn, whose dark and drumly linns raved from the rocky abyss, this track ended in the heathery morasses at the foot of the Kuron hill. Hitherto I had been threading the covert-haunts of roes and black-game, but now the route lay for eight long miles among the domains of grouse and deer.

Although the Kuron hill, from its very ruggedness sometimes gave a short stretch of tolerably level walking, these eight miles of moorland were nevertheless one continued climb till they reached the base of Ben Loy. Sometimes a pack of grouse or a solitary old cock would rise within shot, but I prevented all

unnecessary loading of the game-bag by carrying an empty gun.

The heather at last began to merge into green patches, and the granite boulders became more frequent. In place of starting up singly at intervals, the alpine hares showed in threes and fours on all the adjacent knolls; and in their midst was the fox's cairn, where the last spring litter had been destroyed.

Towering before me in solitary majesty, its crown of granite gleaming in the autumn sun, the sharp peaks and beetling scaurs of Ben Loy gave proof that the day's labour was only about to begin. The deceptive intervening heights and hollows made the mountain appear close before me, but there was still a good extent of ragged grass-ground between my stand-point and the first steep pull, which was really the base of the hill. This ground, blending into grass from heather, was a favourite resort of stray deer from the Black Mount Forest, so I took a resting survey, meaning to profit by it the next opportunity. There were only, however, a few scattered sheep on the skyline, and a shepherd with his collie stealing quietly down the glen.

Not until the first shoulder of Ben Loy is surmounted can the ptarmigan ground be said to begin. The green plant, as necessary to the existence of white grouse as heather to the red, then shoots up among the incessant rock and stone, — some heaped into

shapeless masses, forming gloomy caverns, but mo
often scattered regularly along the hill-face, like t
handiwork of some primeval giant.

I had just loaded, and was about to release
dogs, when from a crag above I detected two sm
heads peering down at my proceedings. Glad t
my four-footed pair were still coupled, and fee
confident that no birds but those I was in pursuit
would be found so high, I only waited to satisfy m
self by the motion of one of them that the two da
knobs were birds' heads, when, taking sure marks,
stalked round the rocks and came in on the opposi
side. To my dismay, a brace of golden plover,
happy security, were within twenty yards of my gu
muzzle! In place of stringing both sitting at on
shot, with a contemptuous jerk I set free the dog
when the plover flew screaming down the hill.

A few moments proved the prudence of this for
bearance, whatever the motive; for Bob the sette
had scarcely taken one sweep of the mountain-scau
when he dropped into a dead set. The pointer w
also statue-like in a moment; but ere I moved a ste
a pack of seven ptarmigan rose out of reach, an
skirted the bald hill-face straight forward. I w
marking their course when the eighth sprang up, bu
taking the opposite direction, crossed me a long sid
chance. I fired; but, if struck, the rapid and dete
mined flight round the steep angle of the cliffs ga
no encouragement to pursue.

The line of the pack, however, was more easily traced and followed; for although the mountain was as thickly studded with stones as a well-macadamised highway, there were no precipices and even few hill-scaurs to contend with. Hunting my dogs in little circles—now on one side, then on the other—I yet trusted my own eyes quite as much as their noses, and took good care never to lose my bearings of the exact line of my game.

Calculating the ordinary flight of the white grouse, I had now reached the limit where it was probable the pack might plump down, when, raising my head from the scrutiny of a tempting cairn, I saw the farther peaks enveloped in dense mist, and at the rate it was driving onwards the whole range would also in no time be engulfed, making the solitary being on the blank mountain nearly as helpless as the sons of Egypt amid the thick darkness that "could be felt."

Facing about, I sped before the grim pursuer with the desperate haste of an Indian from a jungle-fire, and had just reached the trusty guidance of a well-known water-course, when suddenly a slight breeze on my face gave token that the wind had changed. Instead of rushing through the hill-trough, the fog, arrested in mid-course, was rolled into blacker masses, and slowly retreating, while blinks of sunlight regained possession of the murky crags.

Very soon the whole line of hills looked low and

blue as before, and the mist disappeared as myst ously as it came. The lost ground was quickly traced; but I had scarcely reached the point wher was headed by the fog, when, casting my eyes o the heights above, there was the pack, some perc on the granite boulders and the rest on the grou only a few gunshots off. The dogs were instan "heeled in," and, slipping softly up, I was alm within reach when my game looked scared and fl Only six, however, rose, and the seventh was doubt in hiding among the stones. When laid the scent, the dogs instantly stood firm, and at same moment the ptarmigan flew, and was as quic brought low.

The pack of six made straight for the first grou and their pertinacious pursuer followed, in the h that if he obtained a third meeting they ought to less shy of his advances. The rocks between me a the hollow where they were feeding when first d covered were rather hurried over than hunted, but my vigilance and the utmost pains of my careful d found no trace of them there. My plan, therefo was to take a wide circling cast both up and down t hill, and, gradually contracting it, to leave "no sto unsearched" where they could possibly have hidd I had barely reached the outermost, and what s peared to me the least attractive, disc of my circ when the setter pitched sharply down with that se satisfied look back to his master which says as plain

as words, "I have them now." On my getting to the dog's side he rose and stepped briskly forward to the top of a mound, under which the six birds rose together. Two flew back again across the mountain, but four dashed downwards, making for the peak below. The whole lot were nearly out of reach, but I fired quick at the old cock of the four, when he dropped his legs and soon after towered and fell.

The three remaining birds being driven into lower and easier ground, there was every prospect, by following quickly, of soon coming on their traces again. After a flight, white grouse as well as red are much inclined to pitch down under what shepherds call "the snibs" (prominent points) of a hill. As soon, then, as I had descended to their line and given the dogs a fair wind, I began the quest of these excrescences, and very soon was cheered by both dogs drawing to a dead point. This time the game sprang fair, and I dropped one dead with my first barrel and hit another badly with the second.

The struck bird again dipped straight down-hill and settled on the lowest shoulder of the mountain, where I had the good hap to mark it; while the remaining one, flying high in a contrary direction, was of course given up. Having made out the exact group of rocks where the disabled bird had sought shelter, I coupled the dogs and set off down the steep. On the very brink of a crag, and beautifully placed for a sitting chance, I soon perceived a round grey ball. It was,

[illegible] many of the smaller [illegible] the breeze ruffled [illegible] of my game. [illegible] was [illegible] it would [illegible] time even for [illegible] shot.

[illegible] the [illegible] steps of [illegible] still pretty fresh, [illegible] less instead [illegible] the scattered [illegible] however [illegible] by a spring, and [illegible]

[illegible] is steep and rugged. [illegible] always harbours a [illegible] from the nature [illegible] easily found [illegible]

[illegible] unnecessary fatigue, I [illegible] the ptarmigan [illegible] When I had gained the [illegible] and was about to [illegible] beings came suddenly into [illegible] keeping with the savage [illegible] the very dogs stared at them with wonder. There they were in bright scarlet, working amidst the desolation with their instruments at the government survey. When in reply to my query

whether they had seen any ptarmigan, the Garibaldi apparition, with a decided Berkshire accent, described a large pack of grouse which they had "flushed among the 'eath," I turned sharply round, and was off in a moment.

Both sides of Ben Oss descend abruptly into rocky precipices. They can only be ranged to advantage, therefore, by keeping the crest of the hill, and inclining to either slope as the skill of the shooter suggests. Of course the game is easier found by the dogs on the windward side; but as all birds like shelter, a good and quick shot will get more, though not such fair chances, by hunting chiefly to leeward. On the present occasion a fair light breeze wafted along the mountain-top, equally favouring both ridges.

Carefully ranging the top, but always with a serpentine course first to one ridge then across to the other, I had nearly finished the search of the mountain from south to north ere I was rewarded by the statuesque profile of the pointer on the very summit of a crag, and at its base was the setter squatted firm, evidently close to his game. The birds rose from some rocks below the ridge, so when they darted over the precipice the chance was quick and difficult. One fell to the first shot, but the second was nearly out of reach. The pack only contained four; but as the remaining three skimmed round the northern bend of the hill into lower and smoother ground, I had little doubt of recovering them again.

On the flat where I had calculated, the pointer at once touched on the scent; but before he had time to settle, a brace of ptarmigan rose wild, and took a straight course for the adjoining mountain of Duchray. Confident of a shot at the third, I ran forward to where they had taken wing, but was again balked, for the setter came suddenly *down wind* on the other side, and poked up the bird at the very spot I had so hastily quitted! It laboured, however, being evidently touched by my second barrel in the preceding double shot; and, incapable of the daring flight of its companions, turned back on Ben Oss, and slunk into a "gully" close at hand. It was easily found—sprung at my feet, and dropped dead down the ravine.

The sun was now slanting behind the western hills, and, barring the short respite when "the hunter produced his scanty pittance at noon," I had walked hard since early morn. After so trying a day, three brace of ptarmigan on one's shoulder were not to be "made light of," so, turning my back on their mountains, I plodded the homeward ten-mile walk through green morass and over heathery brae, only reaching my own door when the beetle began to drone and the bat to fly.

A sprinkling of ptarmigan lingers on the crests of the higher mountains of Mull, but the packs are generally few in number, and difficult to find. Wishing to ascertain their winter food, we took advantage of

mild day one January, and wended our track to their desolate retreat of rock and snow. The only game-birds that cheered the steep ascent were a couple of woodcocks, flushed at our feet, and summarily cut down. A sharp frost had shortly before so concentrated these migrants on the lower slopes, that ten or twelve couple were only an average good day's sport. The open weather had again completely scattered them, and a few stray birds were all we might now expect.

The labour of finding ptarmigan was much increased by a light coating of snow which capped the peaks of Dundeveuch, and we were warily questing the hollow which separates the sister heights, when my old pointer Bob pulled up to a point. He immediately began to "road," and my companion, who was near him, spied the pair of birds crouched among the snow. The moment he faced them, both ptarmigan started on their pins, eyeing him curiously. He shot one, and the other flew round the peak. It was easily found again by the dog, and killed by myself. When returning, we stumbled on three more at feed on a lower spur of the mountain, but having already secured a pair of stuffed crops, left them for stock next season.

I inspected carefully the feeding of both these birds, and found that it consisted of the tiny leaves and stalks of an evergreen plant which grows only among the rocks on the hill-tops. The previous

autumn I killed another ptarmigan after feed, and its crop also was charged with the very same food. No doubt this rock-plant is as necessary to the ptarmigan as heather to the grouse; and although both may occasionally vary their diet, yet without these staple nourishments they would never thrive, or even live.

THE ALPINE OR WHITE HARE,

SOMETIMES CALLED THE BLUE HARE.

THE white hare inhabits many of our mountains. It is not confined, like the ptarmigan, to the tops of the highest and most inaccessible, but, on the contrary, is often met with on grouse-shooting ranges, where there are few crags or rocks to be seen. I have frequently shot it on flats between the hills, where it had made its form like the common hare; and though I have more often moved it in rocky places—where it sometimes has its seat a considerable way under a stone—I do not think it ever burrows among them, as some suppose; for, although sore pressed, I have never seen it (except when hard hit) attempt to shelter itself, like a rabbit, in that way. Indeed there would be little occasion for this, as its speed is scarcely inferior to the hares of the wood or plain, and it evidently possesses more cunning. When first started, instead of running heedlessly forward, it makes a few corky

bounds, then stops to listen—moving its ears abo
and, if the danger is urgent, darts off at full spe
always with the settled purpose of reaching some h
hill or craggy ravine. If not pressed, it springs alo
as if for amusement; but takes care never to give
enemy an advantage by loitering.

I put up one, on the 16th of March 1840, wh
inspecting the heather-burning on my moor, at Le
in Perthshire, which (contrary to their usual practic
kept watching, and allowed me several times to co
within a hundred yards. I was at first surprised, b
the explanation soon occurred to me that it had you
ones in the heather. I had thus a good opportuni
of noticing the commencement of its change of colo
The head was quite grey, and the back nearly s
which parts are the last to lose, as well as the first
put on, the summer dress. I shot one nearly in t
same stage, on the 22d of November 1839. T
only difference was, that the whole coat of the form
appeared less pure. This is easily accounted for,
in winter the creature, though receiving a fre
accession of hair, loses none of the old, which a
becomes white; whereas in spring it casts it all, l
other animals. Thus, by a merciful provision,
winter covering is doubly thick; while at the s
time, being the colour of snow (with which our
are generally whitened at that time of year), it
more easily elude its numerous foes. The sam
mark applies to the ptarmigan.

I twice shot fine specimens of the alpine and common hare on the same day. The difference between them, when thus closely compared, was very perceptible. The head of the alpine was much rounder, which was rendered more obvious by the shortness of its ears. The scut was also ludicrously small; while the roundness of the body was increased by the soft and very thick coat of fur, which made that of the common hare appear hard and wiry. One of the

ALPINE

COMMON

alpine hares was shot on the 17th of September; there was not the least appearance of the change of colour. The other, shot on the 6th of October, had a few silver hairs about the toes. On the 11th I shot another which had the feet and half the hind legs white, and was a little silvered behind the ears. On the 2d of December I shot another couple: the lower part of the body and hind legs were like swan's down, the back and sides grizzled, and the only un-

changed parts were the [illegible]
The last day I went after them was [illegible]
December, when I wished to [illegible]
change was quite [illegible]
two hares and a [illegible]
that one of the [illegible]
those shot on the [illegible]
in the other hare [illegible]
except a shading [illegible]
never purely white [illegible]
winters.

During a mild [illegible]
from snow, the [illegible]
thickest patch [illegible]
of its conspicuous [illegible]
bushy tufts [illegible]
at such a [illegible]
The purity [illegible] is a true [illegible]
of the severity [illegible] If
winter is open [illegible]
and lower [illegible]
colour; [illegible]
snow, the [illegible]
silvery, [illegible] When [illegible]
from its form, [illegible]
never returns [illegible]
been discovered. [illegible] in
snow, in order [illegible] the
wind, as well as for security. These burrows are

easily discovered by an unaccustomed eye; the hare runs round the place several times, which completely puzzles an observer, and then makes a bound over, without leaving any footmark to detect her retreat. It is hollowed out, like a mine, by the hare's scraping and breath, and the herbage beneath nibbled bare.

When deer-stalking in Glenartney in the autumn of 1850, I was quite amazed at the multitudes of alpine hares. They kept starting up on all sides, some as light-coloured as rabbits, and others so dark as to resemble little moving pieces of granite. I could only account for their numbers from the abundance of fine green food and the absence of sheep, which are as much avoided by hares as by deer, from their dirtying the ground with their tarry [1] fleeces.

An eyewitness, on whom I can depend, gave me a curious account of the tactics of a hill-hare, which completely baffled the tyrant of the rocks. Puss, as is her wont when chased by an eagle, sheltered herself under a stone. The eagle took post at a little distance, and watched long, exactly like a cat waiting for a mouse. Although her fierce foe was out of sight, the hare seemed to have a *mesmeric* knowledge of his vicinity, for she never would move so far from her hiding-place as to be taken by surprise. Several times she came out to feed, but the moment the eagle

[1] Should anybody be disposed to call in question the correctness of this word, I beg to say my title to it is long use and wont: "Tarry woo', tarry woo'!—tarry woo' is ill to spin."

rose she was safe again. At last her pursuer got tired and flew away. The white hare has always refuge of this kind where eagles haunt.

The brown hare is not on good terms with h mountain cousins. The latter have enormously i creased. by the wholesale destruction of the lar vermin, such as eagles, wild-cats, martens, &c. Th have completely dispossessed the common ones those territories where they abound. Like the nor ern hordes, I rather think they owe possession of t land as much to their numbers as their courage, f the brown hare, although proverbially timid, is ver pugnacious. I once saw a battle between two them, which appeared exactly like monkeys sparrin On slipping cautiously forward to see what this Lil putian fight could mean, I was much amused to fi it was a couple of jack-hares, reared upon their hi legs, pummelling each other's heads and shoulders wit right good will. The blows were sharp and true and if all the old brown champions boxed the ears o their alpine kin to the same tune, it must have been no easy matter for the hillmen to make them sound a retreat.

Should an alpine hare be started at the base of a cairn, if unpursued, she will most likely run up to a large piece of rock, and place her back against it, watching the motions of the enemy underneath. She will remain long in this position, quite still. If the sportsman leaves his attendant at the foot of the

cairn, and, by taking a circuit, comes down above, there is no danger of the hare seeing him. The only difficulty is to find out *the* rock, among so many pretty much alike, especially as its shape from above is often very different from what it appeared below. To prevent mistakes, I generally directed my game-carrier to hold out his blue-bonnet in his right or left hand, to point out on which side of me the rock lay; but if it was directly below me, to place his bonnet on the ground. In a calm day I have sometimes taken off my shoes, to prevent the hare from hearing my steps, and very seldom failed to shoot her. This miniature stalking is within the reach of many grouse-shooters; and, by trying their skill at it when the birds grow wild, they may find out whether they have any turn either for wild-fowl or deer stalking.

When one of these hares is pursued by a collie or terrier, she will run round and round the hill, on her own track, trying to confound the scent, and, as a last resource, scuttle along a water-course, if there is one near.

The alpine hare is a good deal less than the common—shorter, and stouter made for its size; and its legs stronger, for climbing in rocky places. Its colour in summer is a blue fawn; and in winter the tips of the ears, which are much shorter than those of the common species, are jet-black.

WOODCOCKS AND SNIPES.

THE habits of woodcocks and snipes cannot fail to interest every one who has opportunity for observing them. There is a method in their movements which arrests the attention of a naturalist; but, unless he is a sportsman too, they are less apt, than many other birds, to come under his notice.

The first few woodcocks generally arrive about the beginning of October. Their approach is always made known by the red-wing, which bird one cannot help connecting with the woodcock, as guests who commonly arrive together, however unlike in other respects. When woodcocks first come, they keep to the open ground, taking refuge in brushwood, rushes or heather. At this time they are constantly found and pointed on the moors; comparatively few frequent the coverts, at least in the daytime: towards dusk, I have seen them come down to the springs. The first frost, however, drives them to the woods, where the

ground is of course less hard. Should the weather continue severe, many take refuge under thick hollies or junipers, especially where these bushes are surrounded by plashy ground. It is worth notice that if a woodcock is found at one of the covert springs about dusk in October, he is sure to be at the same place in the daytime when the frost sets in. Each bird has its own favourite evergreen retreat, which it does not abandon till the weather becomes open. A good beater well knows that this bush should be struck smartly on the opposite side from the gun, or the woodcock is warned, and flies away hidden by the boughs.

During a long-continued period of frost and snow, most of the woodcocks leave the inlands for the oak and larch belts on the coast, in order to feed upon the sea-worms within tide water-mark. This sea-ground, of course, is seldom much affected by frost, and is the last resource of the woodcock during a storm. In the severe winter of 1838-39, hardly a stray cock was to be found in the inland coverts after the first few weeks of hard frost. Numbers were seen dead and dying of starvation among the plantations which skirted the sea, even the sea-worm having failed about the end of that long-continued storm.

The passages of the woodcocks, either at evening flight, or from one part of a coppice to another, when flushed, seldom vary twenty yards. In beating *large* coverts, shots who are aware of this have a great ad-

vantage. After once seeing the bird fly, they can form a shrewd guess where to place themselves next time. By facing the beaters, and securing any opening that the cock may have skirted, they will rarely be disappointed, as every woodcock will be found next day at its former post, and take precisely its former course, *if sprung in the same direction.* Should the bush or tree be beaten on the opposite side to that of the day before, the woodcock has likewise a well-known flight the reverse way. So certain is this propensity, that, even in long narrow strips of plantation, every woodcock flies to the side (unless prevented by bungling irregular beating) a short time after being flushed—the sharp fliers a little farther on, and the tame proportionally nearer. The flight of both can be easily calculated: and if there are two pairs of experienced shots outside the wood, one pair for the wild and the other for the tame birds, scarcely any escape without being fired at.

There are, however, many plantations, and these the most noted haunts of the woodcock, which impossible to beat by the above methods. Few men would even walk through some of these coverts in the Highlands, and shooting out of the question,

> "Where, sunk in
> Gains not the
> And oft so
> Assistan

It is in such

of *real service*. The woodcocks generally fly straight over the tops of the trees, and drop down near the opposite side of the covert. Sometimes they take the whole round, and pitch close to where they were sprung.

Should one of these large circular belts be placed on the steep side of a hill, there is a capital opportunity for taking a lesson in the tactics of this bird. By placing yourself upon an opposite knoll, every flushed woodcock is immediately seen, and his course traced without the possibility of subterfuge or evasion. Many sportsmen place a marker upon this point, and are thus directed to the very spot where all the sprung birds have pitched. But if they had the patience to watch a few times for themselves, they would be amply rewarded by insight into the manœuvres of this interesting visitant. If sprung fairly, most of the birds will top precisely the same trees, and fly past the same openings every time. Some will make it their rule to pitch down after taking one stretch across; others, by wheeling about, take two; while a few lazy ones may content themselves with a flight only half through the wood. If flushed a second time, however, their movements, *for that day*, are not so much to be depended on. Should the party of beaters be numerous and noisy, many of the woodcocks will drop down outside the covert, especially if much persecuted and driven about. Some sly old fellows try this ruse after their first flight. The sportsman,

therefore, should always walk round the plantation outside before quitting it. But, as most of the birds will fly sharp, he must be prepared for snaps. The extreme regularity of the woodcock's flight has been proved to me, even after putting him up the second time. We flushed one in the Kilmun coverts, out of reach. He flew straight for a bit of marshy ground; some woodcutters were at work there, and prevented his settling. In a short time we noticed him come back, and light close to the same spot where he was first put up. He again rose wild; but my beater reminded me of the woodmen. So we stationed ourselves in the line of his return progress, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing him, as we expected; and I shot him flying over my head.

In overgrown larch plantations, with long bare stems, it is impossible to fire too soon, as all the shots must be taken before the birds rise to the branches. If, on the contrary, the covert is low, the cock should be allowed to get among the tree-tops; and there will, most likely, be opening enough for a quick shot. Otherwise, pick a snap through the *thinnest* screen of tree-tops and branches. To do all this *mechanically* requires both self-command and long practice. Of course these remarks refer to large plantations, where there are no open spaces to take advantage of.

A few woodcocks remain to breed in this country; and nests of young are found, most seasons, in the heathery islands of Loch Lomond. When the summer

is very warm, they, like the wild drakes, moult so severely as for a short time to be unable to fly. I have occasionally seen them in the twilight, after a calm, clear, summer day, chasing each other high in the air; making a piping noise not unlike the "blouting" of a mire-snipe. In former times, I never heard of their nests being discovered: so, most likely, our less sunny summers have induced a sprinkling of them to remain the whole year. I have in my collection a couple of woodcocks' eggs, found in Inchtavanach a few springs ago.

The evening flight of the woodcock is rather earlier than the wild duck's. The shrill chirp of the blackbird is a good signal when to expect them. This chirpy scream of the blackbird generally begins a little before dusk; the woodcocks fly about dusk, and the ducks a little after. In a good place for evening flight, you may generally secure four or five fair chances at woodcock. A few cocks come to the coverts again in March, immediately before taking their final departure. As the ground is then soft, and plenty of worms, &c., are to be found in every part of it, they are not so apt to frequent moist places, and may, in fact, be flushed in any part of the coppice. It is therefore scarcely worth while to beat for them.

Numbers of the mire-snipe breed among the heather on our moors, and afford no small amusement to the grouse-shooter. I have often bagged four or five

couple in a day, when after grouse,—merely pick them up as they came in the way. The young constantly met with in all stages of progress—fr the downy ball of a few days old, to the scarc fledged bird essaying its first tottering flight.

Jacks come in September, but are more local their habits. They are found in considerable ple on many of our more marshy moors. It is v amusing to witness the attempts of an indifferent s at jack-snipes in such open ground. They are ea found by a good dog, as they have a strong scent; a being close-lying birds, they generally spring withi yard of the sportsman's toes; who at last wishes teasing game far enough, when a heroic jack dogge offers another chance. A good shot will hit a j even more certainly than a mire-snipe.

In bare ground, I have frequently noticed b mire and jack snipes squatted before my dog's no Once I plainly saw the point of a mire-snipe's b stuck in the ground, ready to hoist him into the a I watched narrowly, and, in taking wing, he used h long bill exactly as we would a walking-stick. Snip have the same predilection for a particular spot woodcocks. One severe winter my retriever spra a mire-snipe out of a puddle, close to the Gala wat It flew across the stream, and I fractured the tip its wing just when it reached the other side. It f among thick furze, and we were unable to find Next day my retriever picked it up at the same dit

unable to fly a yard. It could only have recrossed the Gala by swimming.

While speaking of the covert, I shall make one quotation from a periodical about *battue*-shooting, which entirely coincides with my own ideas: "The *battue* is a bastard sport—an attempt to graft foreign customs on good English pastimes. It is only fitted for the emasculated creatures who have not sense or stamina enough to endure a day's toil in the legitimate pursuit of beasts and birds, whom nature seems to have designed for the purpose of testing the skill and resolution of men in the pursuit and capture of them."

SEA-FOWL SHOOTING IN T FIRTH OF FORTH.

We have long discovered two distinct and v different classes amongst men who are fond of r tion with the gun. By far the most numerous are mere shooting-machines, whose delight is s tridge or grouse *drive*, when the honours of th are accorded to him who has the largest heap of birds at his feet. The plan of the campaign is s enough. A row of guns take up a position und mask of a wall, hedge, or drain, crossing the where the driven birds are sure to fly. A large ber of beaters are sent round to raise the game, keep constantly dashing past, or over the heads sportsmen. When all the partridge or grous moved in one direction, the shooters wheel t right about, and the flight is again driven fro opposite quarter. No doubt this requires goo very quick shooting, but so does the *battue* an

geon-trap; and for our own part, we see little difrence in these three lazy and luxurious modes of ird-butchery.

The other class to whom we allude, so far as our wn experience goes, are far less numerous. They ave little sympathy with these massacres; and although regarding quick and true shooting as the first requisite, it is no more than the *first*—the A B C of sporting with the gun.

To feel the superiority of a man of this stamp, you require to see him out over a rugged country, where game is not over plentiful, and when the November blasts have made it wild and wary. The complete self-reliance, caution, and care with which he will give his beautifully-trained dogs the benefit of all the best spots to harbour game; the knowing manner he will approach it when found; the masterly way he will spring the pack or covey to advantage; and the exquisitely quick and steady shooting—so essential when game is strong and shy—make an empty bag to a shooter with the above qualifications a rare event. It is evident, however, that none can possess them without long experience and acute observation, advantages which have most likely enticed the possessor into the tempting province of the naturalist. A new field has thus been opened up. The sportsman studies the nature and habits of the wild creatures of chase, not merely to get shots at them, but also for the pleasure derived from the study itself. In place of

being confined to the shooting months, *his* sportin
season comprises the whole year. The advent an
departure of migrants; the discovery of a rare visit
with perhaps the triumph of adding him to t
museum; the inexpressible delight and excitement
a trip to the crags and cliffs of the ocean, swarmi
with their varieties of wild sea-birds, with wil
cries, are now objects of even greater interest th
his most successful day among the grouse or the de

The time for studying the peculiar and individual characteristics of sea-fowl is the month of May. Not only are the birds tamer then, and their instincts more prominently brought out, but each species is decked in its most imposing and brightest attire. From a lightly-rigged yawl on a sunny May morning with a gentle breeze, the *coup d'œil* of a coast, well frequented by sea-birds, and in the neighbourhood of their breeding-rocks, is the most absorbing of all marine views. You see the countless array of guillemots, razor-bills, sea-parrots, cormorants, and grebes—some diving at your approach, others rising in your wake, numbers darting on wing, a fair though quick cross-shot, past the bow or stern of your trig little craft; an infinite variety of gulls, from the giant to the kittywake, flapping lazily over and around you, and the solan in the distance, just poising, then coming down prone like a meteor into the glancing wave, the dull thud of the plunge being heard at a mile's distance. Soaring among them from her secure nest

among the most fearful of the beetling cliffs is the sooty raven, scarcely, however, to be distinguished, but by her croak, from a jackdaw; while the peregrine, also nidifying on a giddy point, and faring sumptuously on her sea neighbours, seems dwarfed to a merlin.

Amidst this magnificent but, to the uninitiated, chaotic panorama, we have placed the occupant of the picturesque fishing-boat, and will suppose him a keen sportsman just lapsing into the naturalist. Anxious for rare specimens, but totally bewildered, he turns helplessly to the boatmen, who overpower him, as the fowl dash past, with the coast slang nicknames—Marrots, Tommie Nories, Nettleducks, Coll-the-caunle-wicks, Letter-o'-marques, &c.—until, perhaps, the day closes with a boat-load of trash, and only some distant random chances at the wilder, rarer, or more gorgeous treasures of the deep.

How vastly intensified in interest does this living sea become to the keen eye of an experienced sportsman who is at the same time an accomplished naturalist! Not only does he know each kind and genus by book, but, from an intimate knowledge of their habits and manners, and a quick eye kept in constant practice, can distinguish every variety at distances which (to a novice) appear impossible. He scans the sea with his telescope, detects at a glance the specimens he is in search of, and immediately decides upon the safest approach that offers a fair pros-

[illegible] of a successful shot. Should he secure the coveted object of pursuit, it is not alone its rarity or [illegible] which makes his heart to dance like little Shelley over the waves, but the associations sure to cling to it in many and far-distant years. To him each of those sea-birds that grace his museum suggests its own wild tale of romance or beauty. The [illegible] the gleaming tranquil sea, the [illegible] headland or haunting boundless old ocean, [illegible] to his mind's eye fresh and glorious, even by a passing glance at that little denizen of the deep.

The North Berwick fishermen had written to say that eiders were plentiful, and had begun to seek the nesting shoals in the Firth. Accompanied by my eldest son, and armed with our shoulder duck-guns, we were [illegible] early afloat for a cruise in search of them. The day was bright, but the breeze perhaps rather too fresh to give us full advantage in manœuvring wild-fowl. We soon sighted several flocks of snowy drakes with their russet partners; but from bearing too eagerly down upon them, raised them all out of reach of even a cross-shot. Like all other game, wild-fowl have their fidgety moods, sometimes without any apparent cause. This morning, the eiders being shy and "fretty" on water, we ran down to the islet of Fiddery, hoping for a stalking-shot from the land. Although we expected any feeding or resting fowl would be moored in the sheltered bays, we first made sure of the exposed shore with our

glasses, and then noiselessly and stealthily landed on it. Directly opposite was a tiny bay—a favourite haunt, with the wind in the quarter in which it then was. The approach was simple, and, to an experienced shot, certain. When I got to the top of the rock immediately above, as I expected, there were about a dozen ducks and drakes diving and sporting in joyous security. A sheer descent of seventy yards rather cooled my eagerness to fire, well knowing that even with my trusty "Ross" gun this was a most uncertain shot. Choosing a fine drake, I fired, and he lay motionless on the water; but my second shot was not so fortunate, as the bird aimed at flew rapidly round the island with the rest.

The boatman soon fished up the dead bird, and we beat up against the wind, looking out for a fresh chance. I was not long in espying a solitary white speck in the direct line of the team I had shot at, which I at once suspected was my second-barrel bird. Getting well to windward, we carefully bore down, and the eider, although uneasy, allowed us to run within reach of a long shot, then heavily rose, and hanging against the wind, crossed our bow. We fired together. The bird dropped, and instantly dived, but soon rose again to the surface—dead.

We had now secured two splendid eider drakes, but to complete the case a brown mate was needed for each. Again I scanned the wide expanse of water with the telescope, and soon fixed it on a large bird

in the smooth water near the mainland coast. "It's the loon, sir," shouts the boatman; "there's one o them has haunted these bays for the last fortnight." As I had no specimen yet, the Great Northern was a prize worth trying for. From their weakness in the air, and their amazing power in the water, grebes and divers are very unwilling to take wing, always preferring to baffle their foes in the element to which nature has so finely adapted them. The difficulty, therefore, of getting a shot consists in their jealousy of a close approach, and the power they all possess, by swimming very low, of slipping under water like magic.

The Great Northern is not only the most wary of the diving tribe, but his progress under water is as fast as that of some birds in the air, and the length of his dive often extends to a quarter of a mile. We therefore went to work very cautiously: first tacking about to windward for some time, to accustom the bird to the appearance of the boat, and then gently wearing her, we approached imperceptibly nearer and nearer. The loon was greedily feeding, and from the shortness of his dives, and the rapidity with which they succeeded each other, he had evidently an abundant feast. Crouching in the bow, with my gun at my shoulder, I was several times within long range; but either this quick-eyed grebe dipped down just as my finger touched the trigger, or his position was unfavourable for shot to penetrate the oily feathers.

At last, however, I did get a fair chance at sixty yards, and the No. 3 dropped round him in perfect pattern. He was down in a twinkling, and did not show again for some time. We followed, but in vain, for each dive became longer the further we pursued—and little did I think that this king of divers had his death-wound, and would yet be mine. Two days after, some poor fishermen found him dead; and when he was skinned, it was discovered that a No. 3 pellet had passed through one side of the head, and lodged above the eye on the other.

The chase after the Great Northern Diver had taken us out to sea again, and brought us nearly opposite the second islet of the group, named "The Lamb." The eastern rocks are a favourite stance of the great cormorant, or "scart," called by fishermen at the breeding season "Letter-o'-marques," from the white patches on the top of each thigh. On the pinnacle of one of these rocks, which rise abruptly out of the water like the Needles in the Isle of Wight, three were seated in state, sunning themselves luxuriously after their morning feed. There was little hope of a shot from the sea, but no difficulty in getting within seventy yards from the land. On gaining the rocks I had an interesting inspection of the trio, who were extending their long wings and preening their feathers in full enjoyment of the noonday sun.

Selecting the brightest-coloured of the group, I fired from a rest, and the bird dropped into the

[redacted] appeared for an instant on the top, then [redacted] and plunged down. His companions meanwhile [redacted] in a sea. The boat being at the other side of the island was some time in coming round, and either from the roughness of the sea, or from the cormorant having found a hiding-place on the shore, we never saw it again.

During the remainder of the day we tried every [redacted] both on land and water, to procure at least one female eider, but failed, neither of two very distant chances from the boat being successful.

Next morning, the breeze having died away into a dead calm, we were reduced to "wooden sails," a mode of progress and approach relished neither by boatmen nor sea-fowl. At every curl on the distant line the former waved and whistled for a breeze, but all in vain. They were forced to bend their unwilling backs to a three-mile pull for another search of Fiddery, with the poor prospect of a random shot by the way.

The sight and sound of a row-boat always put wild-fowl on their guard, and generally stimulate them to be alert and uneasy; so, notwithstanding the frequent groups of eiders and scoters floating all round on the quiet sea, the dip of the oars scared each team far out of reach. Unfortunately, also, the large flock of male and female eiders had posted themselves *outside* the bays of Fiddery, beyond the reach of shot. As they were most unlikely to move

when the water was so smooth, we had to change our tactics by taking post for a flying chance, while the boatmen pulled round to drive them, if possible, within range of our hiding-places.

A bluff of detached and jagged rock rising abruptly in the sea, a little to the west of the island, afforded me safe ambush, while my son succeeded equally well in securing himself among the rough stones of the Fiddery coast. We had thus a narrow sea between us, where the fowl, if judiciously flushed, would be very likely to pass within reach of either gun, when rounding the west corner of the island from its northern end, where they were now seated.

A few detached birds dashing past in mid-channel, and of course out of reach, showed that the fishermen had succeeded in their task. The main body soon followed this advanced-guard. They simultaneously took wing, but soon separated into three groups. Two of these kept the island side, but the third flew straight for my rock. With eager heart and ready weapon I waited until they skimmed overhead, a quick but fair chance. A female eider dropped on the water to my shot, but seeing she was only winged, I was taking aim with my second barrel when she dived, and did not rise again within range.

Bang! bang! from the islet. My telescope was instantly fixed on my son. He was wading into the sea, where I distinctly saw him pick up a dead bird. Our boatmen, who had been straining hard,

now pulled up to my stance, and at the same time my son was making signs to me in a certain direction so, instead of pursuing my winged duck, we obeyed his signal, and soon spied a solitary bird, which proved a female eider. Upon nearing her she dived but being hard hit in the body, soon came to the surface again, when we made her safe by a shot.

This happy right and left having supplied a companion to each of the eider drakes, we triumphed in anticipation of our collection being adorned with these superb examples of natural history. Could I have foreseen that ere the day closed another of these much-admired eiders would have deprived me of a shot at the rarest sea-bird I ever detected in the Firth, I might not have regarded them so complacently.

Having landed to search one of the homeward islands, a male eider was asleep on a promontory which flanked a tiny bay. A ledge of rocks, parallel to both, made the stalk after fowl either in this creek or on the promontory very easy. Neglecting (contrary to my wont) to examine the bay, I gave my whole notice to the unsuspecting drake, struck him badly at the sitting shot, and brought him down dead with the other.

Before I could rise from my hiding, three little sea-fowl swam rapidly into view from the bay. They never saw me, and seeming more surprised than frightened, never attempted to fly. The leader had

a hood like a hoopoe, and in the centre of the hood a white star,—the Hooded Merganser! It was a tempting and mortifying moment to watch the little trio, within such fair distance at first, quickly paddle out of reach long before I was "shotted."

Leaving the eider where he fell, we were soon in full chase; but the American strangers had, on second thoughts, betaken themselves to their wings, when I ran to warn the men to bring the boat, and I have never fallen in with this rare mergus before or since. When we returned to pick up the dead drake, the fishermen, far from sympathising with my chagrin at losing such a prize, were firmly convinced that the eider ought to be ample consolation, and was by far the more valuable "fule" of the two.

With the exception of the black guillemot, and the great cormorant when dignified by his credentials, my museum now contained all the native sea-birds of the Firth of Forth. A pair or two of these sable guillemots sometimes hatch on the Island of May, whose dizzy crags also afford a secure night-roost to the scart, while its boisterous sea-coves are the favourite retreat of the green cormorant or shag. The distance of "the May" from North Berwick is eight miles, but it is necessary to be cautious in crossing this channel in an open boat, as a little wind soon raises a heavy sea.

My usual skipper, Glass, being absent at the herring-fishing, we hired the most sea-worthy fishing-

smack in the harbour, belonging to his late] and assistant Kelly. Although there were some streamers, what seaman call a "dirty" or "du sky, yet the west wind was gentle, and perfectly for our destination, the lighthouse of May.

Kelly's crew was made up of his father-in- an old whale-fisher, and a stout lad who seeme have been nourished on tobacco and whisky. W the sail was hoisted outside the docks, with the west wind just strong enough to fill it, and the and Tantallon spread before us, with all their rom associations, one's spirit rose as in earlier days.] our crew appeared to share the enthusiasm—not less, perhaps, from the good supply of meat, d and tobacco. If I *did* catch Kelly casting a fu glance now and then at the streaky horizon seemed ashamed of himself; as for the old wh he regarded sea, sky, wind, everything with t contempt, except the provision-basket.

In sailing over to the May, the boat might] been freighted with the commoner kind of sea-b but we only shot a few for the boatmen. A of solans crossed the bow, when my son dro both—a right and left shot—and they were clev netted as the boat sailed past. A third flew by stern, which I killed, but being unwilling to lose t by tacking, we left it on the waves. We decline shoot again at these geese, which may almost termed private property.

The breeze had freshened, and the waves were high enough to make shooting difficult, and landsmen squeamish. The boat was, however, abreast of the south-west corner of the May, and we were about to hug the land in a search of the western rocks for cormorants and the black guillemot. The west wind, so friendly in the morning, was now a bitter foe, for it drove the surf upon the rocks in great booming billows, making it no easy task to discern the difference of sea-birds at any distance, and next to impossible to force the cormorants from the shelter of the caves. In a cavern less exposed to the rolling swell, a pair of shags were perched on a point of rock. The boatmen clapped their hands and shouted, but both birds dropped into the terrific boiling caldron below. They remained so long in this whirlpool that we fancied they had escaped out to sea. At last they emerged and took post on the same ledge. Kelly then threw a piece of wood at them. One dived, but the other flew out, and was shot by my son. As its neighbour did not show again in the cave, it no doubt escaped into the sea by a long underwater swim. The cormorant we secured was a male, in the richest green, with a spring tuft in perfection.

The black guillemot was not visible to-day, but a pair of peregrines flew out screaming from their eyrie, the sharp flicker of their wings contrasting with the solemn flap, flap of the sea-birds.

The ebbing tide made our landing on the May

for a trial of the cormorant-roosts rather difficult. On our way we called at the lighthouse, and the keeper and his wife most civilly agreed to give us tea on our return from the rocks, and allowed us to eke it out by shooting a rabbit. A row of "Letter-o'-marques" were already drawn up on their night quarters. One of the nearest, decked in the most bright and varied colours, looked like their chief. Of course *he* was the target, but being fixed at far too long a range, dropped down the abyss with the rest, little inconvenienced by the No. 2. Had we not been so eager, another overlooked approach would have abridged the distance by thirty yards, when most likely this brilliant specimen would have been ours. The only resource now was to take post above the rocks, and await the return of our fugitives. As dusk was setting in, they soon began to cross backwards and forwards at long distance. Fearing that darkness would stop our shooting, we were forced to try these random chances, which were all shot-proof.

Seated at our snug meal in the lighthouse, Kelly appeared with rueful face. "The nicht," he said, "looked ugly: rain had set in, and they had much difficulty, from the surf and low tide, in getting our carpet-bags out of the boat." I suggested pulling her up on the beach, but Kelly shook his head. They could neither take her out of the water, nor come on shore themselves all night, lest she might be dashed

in pieces. We therefore made the poor fellows as comfortable as we could by a bottle of whisky, some good table-beer, and an ample supply of food.

We begged our kind host to allow us to see the tower lighted. This was strictly against rules, but he at once agreed to let my son see the lights put out. As this ceremony took place at four in the morning, I was too sleepy to join it; but my son affirmed that a more startling and brilliant illumination he had never beheld.

A loud rap at six next morning, and Kelly's voice imploring us to leave our beds, roused me from a sound sleep. When the tide was full they had run the fishing-boat into a sheltered creek, but as it was ebbing fast we must embark in less than an hour, failing which the boat must be moved out to sea, and neither we nor our baggage might be able to get on board. Kelly added carelessly, but slyly, "There is a queer bird diving outside the creek where the boat is, that nane o' us kens what it is." This was a master-stroke. We were down in half the time stipulated, and immediately assured that the unknown was still at his post. I was completely puzzled. At first I fancied the bird a smew, but was corrected by the telescope. Cautiously shoving nearer and nearer with the boat-hook, the little diver at length began to sheer off. Now was the time to fire, and it lay dead to my son's shot—a black guillemot, but in the light speckled plumage of winter.

The sails were scarcely hoisted, when, in the distance, but flying towards us, I distinctly saw another of these guillemots, but this one was black as ebony. He crossed between us and the shore, about 300 yards from the boat. Both telescopes were fixed, if possible to mark him down. He soon plumped into the water, and every time the wave rose we had a full view of the black speck on his crest. The jumble of the sea made shooting uncertain, but I still preferred a long chance to the probability of flushing the bird out of reach by coming sharply down for a closer one. Kelly, as usual, steered to perfection, and brought our craft down abreast of the prize in the exact line I had pointed out. On the first wave lifting the black prince into view my son fired, but he took wing, and both of us shot at him flying. Kelly said he was hit, and soon his assertion was verified—the little bird rose in the air, wheeled, and fell dead in the sea.

These being the only pair of black guillemots seen, we were all (Kelly excepted) proportionably elated. The old whaler spun yarns about seals, white bears, walruses, and other polar wonders. The sea-urchin whiffed his pipe and grinned patronisingly. Our skipper, however, still peered stealthily to the west, and seemed unwilling to lose time by a tack after a group of eiders a little to the south. We were now in no mood to give in; so, having settled that I was to fire at the drakes and my son at the ducks, we ran

past them at long range. He knocked over his bird, and I struck mine, which flew a little distance, and then dropped dead. The eider being also called the "St Cuthbert's Duck," we presented this case to my old and very dear friend, one of the ministers of St Cuthbert's. Of the former two cases, one is in my brother's collection at Rossdhu, the other in my own.

Under a rather stiff gale we recrossed the channel, but only when under the lee of the North Berwick coast did our captain's brow clear up. Well did this skilled boatman of the Firth know how suddenly the blast he had been dreading might, like Harpsdale's, come at last! With a quiet chuckle he muttered—"Noo, we're a' richt;" and joyously, not to say triumphantly, steered into port.

The death of the black guillemots on 7th April 1864 gave rise to the following correspondence:—

"THE BLACK GUILLEMOT.

"SIR,—The pleasantly-written articles upon the wild-fowl of the Firth of Forth, with which your papers upon Natural History are agreeably begun, contain a statement, the importance of which the writer seems to have been unconscious of.

"In common, I believe, with every resident of the neighbourhood of the Firth who has taken an interest in its wild-fowl, I am surprised to hear that the black

guillemot (*Uria grylle*), the *Tyste* of the Orcadians, i still to be met with in its waters; and I am yet mor astonished to hear that its nests are sometimes to b found upon the Isle of May. Were it not that your con tributor evidently writes with a competent knowledg of marine ornithology, I should at once consider tha he has mistaken young birds of the common guillemc in their transition plumage for their black namesake

"There is no doubt that, if we can rely upon ol writers on natural history, the black guillemot did a a former period build on the Bass, and, no doubt, o the May; but I have never happened to meet wit any naturalist or sportsman who ever found a singl specimen in the Firth. As to their nests, I am my self acquainted with almost every nook and crevice c the Bass and May, and I think I may absolutely sa the black guillemot has never been known to buil on either within the memory of man. They ar found in vast numbers among our more norther islands. They are considerably smaller than the razo bill; and their nests are at once distinguished fro others by the material fact that, like the little aul they lay *two* eggs, whilst the rest of the species la but one. The eggs, too, are considerably smaller, an much less pear-shaped than those of other rock-build ing auks.

"The common guillemot, the razor-bill, and th puffin, breed in the Firth of Forth, and the little au is an occasional and most interesting winter visitor

but I confess I read with a doubting surprise that any other of the auk tribe has its nest on our islands.

"That stray specimens may sometimes appear, is not only a possible but a most probable circumstance; but that a gentleman should sail out with the intention of shooting black guillemots, and actually succeed in bagging two, will, I think, be looked upon by every local ornithologist as a most remarkable circumstance. —I am, &c., S."

The Author writes in reply to this communication: "I am delighted with your correspondent 'S.'s' letter. Sanderson, the bird-stuffer, of 66 George Street, knows I went to the May for the express purpose of shooting a black guillemot. He stuffed the two for me when I returned. Kelly, of North Berwick (the fisherman), his father-in-law, and a lad in his boat, saw my son and me shoot them exactly as described, and I refer 'S.' to both these parties. Lastly, the pair is stuffed and placed in my case of rock birds at my house, No. 1 Royal Terrace, where I invite 'S.' to go and inspect them. One is jet black, the other speckled. Both were shot the same day of April 1864. I have not my journal by me of last year, or I could tell the day. It is in Edinburgh, at my house there."

In variety both of shore-birds and water-fowl, the sea-coast far exceeds the fresh-water loch; and although, from the mask of sea-weed and shifting tides, the shots are more random and precarious

than on fresh-water lochs, yet the sea-coast is always preferable to the wild-fowl shooter, as yielding more choice specimens, and far greater numbers of birds. For this reason, a hardy and intelligent sportsman naturalist will uphold salt-water shooting as the most delightful, I may say instructive, of any.

From the dearth of shore insects, waders are rare in all fresh-water lochs; whereas, on one wild bit of coast flanking the Sound of Mull, I have counted even in autumn, red and green shanks, turn-stones, knots, dunlins, sanderlings, curlews, oyster-catchers, herons, and the common sandpiper.

Although in open weather the fishing diver fares much better inland than the wader, still the supply of small fish is vastly inferior to the sea. The majority of these divers, therefore, keep to the market where the supply is best, and only some stray ones of certain species find their way to fresh water. The more common edible ducks are as fond of the green food of fresh lochs as they are of salt-water feeding, and some species of diving dabblers even prefer it. These last, being seldom out of condition, and excellent food, are much sought after by all wild-fowl sportsmen.

The staple supply of the inland lochs, such as dun-birds, tufted ducks, golden-eyes, teal, widgeon and the common wild-duck, is to be found in still greater abundance on the salt water. Perhaps the most lacuscular is the tuft. Although hard weather

regularly sends a good many female scaups to Lochs Lomond and Vennachar, the males seldom accompany them. I never knew a male scaup killed on either loch except one, and that was a bird of the year, in immature plumage. The old males, however, sometimes frequent fresh water *close to the sea*. I shot for my collection an old drake, in the finest plumage, on Duddingston Loch, near Edinburgh. This is curious, female scaups being so tame in fresh water as to be more easily stalked than most wild-fowl. Why, then, are their mates so shy of trusting themselves away from the sea?

The purely oceanic ducks, although flat-billed, are never good for the table, but most of them are beautiful creatures to stuff for a museum. As they can't rise *except against the wind*, when shooting them under canvas you must always beat to windward; they are thus forced to cross the bow or stern of your craft, and give a *side* shot. So intercepted, they are less willing to take wing out of reach.

THE BASS ROCK.

This singular cliff of the sea has been the subject of many pages and many prints; but no description can lessen the amazement felt on beholding it for the first time. I had been familiar with much of our sternest coast-scenery—had shot sea-fowl on the Clet of Caith-

ness, and stalked seals under the savage and perpe dicular rocks of Morayshire; but there is a grande about this solitary giant of the deep which is differe from any of the wildest scenes I had gazed upon befo

When we near the Bass, the ochre-coloured lich which covers many of the rocks, contrasted with t white guano of the sea-fowl, and the white feathers the solans, has what painters call a "fine pictor effect." But when the boatmen pull slowly und the beetling cliff, studded from top to bottom wi rank upon rank of living fowl, one is rather paralys than impressed with the stupendous scene.

At the time I was there, a raven's nest was fix near the top of the western side. Three of the you in appearance no bigger than blackbirds, were peeri over the side. I could scarcely believe they were n jackdaws. The peregrine falcon had also built ot side the tower, and was wheeling aloft in compa with the geese. I pointed him out as a sparro hawk, and was equally astonished when assured l the old boatman that he was "the blue hunti hawk." His nest was afterwards harried by a boa crew from North Berwick, who came for the purpo in the night. Well did I know the peregrine, a had often admired his graceful bearing among l native hills. The sable tenant of desolation was equally familiar acquaintance; and that I shou have so strangely mistaken both, was sufficient pro of the vast height to which I looked.

Intending to shoot some specimens, I had brought my duck-gun, and at the first shot killed a puffin or sea-parrot, called a "Tommy Norie" by the old sailor in command of our craft. These pretty birds are very shy, although a good many haunt the landing bay. They always lay their one egg out of sight and never upon the ledges of the rock. One or two were hatching in the holes of the prison where our fearless Reformer was confined: when peeping out with their quaint bills, they had an ancient look that reminded one of sturdy John, with his slouched hat, looking out of his loophole window.

The razor-bills are now scarce on the rock; they are more retired in their habits, and apt to conceal themselves in the clefts. I was fortunate in getting a chance at a very fine one flying past, and knocked him over. There are none of the small black guillemot on the Bass, although they sometimes hatch on the Island of May. The common kind, called by our boatmen "marrats," are very numerous. They are ranged along the cliffs like companies of soldiers; and half-a-dozen might often be strung at a shot. The kittiwakes are always perched at a good height upon a narrow ledge. I shot at one discharge a couple of these beautiful little gulls, which toppled almost into the boat. A few purple sandpipers were flitting from rock to rock at the base; I also slew a couple of them.

There is a long narrow cavern right through the

island, which every year harbours a pair of small green cormorants or shags; but the great cormorant only frequents the Bass in winter. We rowed into this cave, and hallooed several times. Just when we had got to the point where a sulky rock barred out further progress, and had given up hope, out she flew over our heads, and within ten yards' distance. I stumbled, from the looming swell, in rising to fire, or I could easily have shot her. Having already killed a specimen, it was just as well the poor bird escaped.

We now landed at Tommy Norie bay, and ascended the rock. Rabbits had been introduced by the present tenant some years ago, and have increased to a great extent. They were popping in and out of Blackadder's cell—a most wretched hole, with a small aperture for a window. We were told, however, that when removed there, from one much more comfortable, his health had wonderfully recruited; a circumstance I could nowise attribute to any salubrity in the abode, but to the merciful care of God over His faithful servants.

The rabbits seemed also to have taken a great fancy to the old chapel. Several were dotting about inside among the nettles, and had no means of exit, as we stood at the door. Their only enemies here are the raven and the peregrine. We saw the bones of a guillemot, which the latter had lately picked. On the top was a colony of gulls. There were two pairs of the greater black-backed or giant gull, and

several pairs of the herring-gull. We were fortunate in spying one of the nests of the giant with two eggs. The boatman assured us they were fresh, as three was the usual number. Shortly after, we detected a herring-gull's nest with the full complement. The old tar was more doubtful of *them*. We therefore took the whole lot to what they call "the Spring" (though one accustomed to the pure springs of the Highlands is loath to allow it the name); and old Jack was right, for the large gull's eggs sank like stones, while the herring-gull's rose up on end, but did not come to the top. We thus saw that they had been sat upon for some time, but not long enough to prevent them from being blown. There are one or two more of these wells, from half a foot to three feet deep, with soft oozy bottoms. They afford drink to a few sheep pastured upon the rock. At the fall of the year, there were ten white-faced seven-month-old lambs put on; but the half died. Had they been the black-faced, and a little older, they would have thriven apace, as the grass is very nutritious, and there is fine shelter in the clefts from every winter storm, whatever its drift.

If the look-up was astounding, the look-down was appalling. I certainly felt little inclined to covet the esteemed post of cliffman; which office, the old sailor told me with no little pride, his father had held for thirty years. He had succeeded him for a few years; but gave it up, as he was too weak to throw the young

solans clear of the rock into the sea beneath. To do this effectually requires a very powerful arm. Many years ago, an aspiring blacksmith, trusting to his ponderous strength, offered to descend the Bass Rock. The ropes were adjusted, and he was lowered over the first shelf. As soon as he caught sight of the blue sea, and the abyss between, he went raving mad, and would not move. The people in the boat below perceived his state, and made signs to let him down, which was done by main force. It took several men to hold him in the boat; but, in about a month, he regained his faculties. He is now an old man; but to this day has never spoken slightingly of a cliffman's duties, or volunteered his unsolicited services.

About sixty years ago, when Canty Bay was much infested by smugglers, there lived below Tantallon a family of the name of Kelly. They were men of great resolution and herculean strength. The old tar said he had seen one of them take a pipe of smuggled wine upon his knee and drink out of the "bung-hole." He was not at all pleased to see me smile at the relation of this feat. The grandson of this family had the reputation of being the best cliffman that ever descended the Bass. Upon one occasion he was searching above, and one of his uncles in the boat below: a very small pebble was dislodged near the top, and struck the uncle upon his thick sea-hat. It cut through the hat, stuck

into his skull, and before they could row ashore he had nearly bled to death. The geese are sometimes shaimed in the same way.

Adams, the renter of the Bass, was very dexterous in the management of the ropes above, which considerably lessens the risk of descent. There are regular periods in the year for this perilous work. The first search takes place at the beginning of summer, to gather the eggs of the guillemots, kittiwakes, &c.; and another in August, to collect the young gannets, which are stripped of their down, and then sold in the Edinburgh and other markets for sixpence apiece. The eggs of the gulls and kittiwakes are excellent; but those of the guillemots, razor-bills, and puffins are rank-tasted.

I was amused to see the high mark they set upon the "purple geese," or those which have speckled backs, in consequence of not having quite shed the brown feathers. They are about three years old, and the beauty of the bird is in exact ratio to the brown spots on its back. For my part, I thought the pure white much handsomer. To please the old boatman, I shot a "purple," as well as a snowy specimen to stuff, and another pure white bird for his feathers, to dress sea-flies. They are superior for this purpose even to those of a swan.

Numbers of gannets flitted past with billfuls of decayed sea-weed for building their nests. These were formed entirely of this material, as we ascertained

from examining the habitations of the two colonies which have been obliged to nidify on the top of the rock, all the shelves and ledges on the face being forestalled. They were so tame at these two places as often to refuse to move until kicked off the nest. They then stood chattering with open bill, and if you attempted to touch them would inflict a severe bite. Their threatening attitudes were ludicrously pompous.

One year the whole west side of the rock was depopulated, from fishermen and others having shot them when they wandered up the Firth in August, after an unusually long-continued shoal of herrings. The manner of the solan's attack upon these shoals is very curious. From a height of fifty or sixty feet, he comes down into the deep head foremost, with the solidity of a stone. I have watched a dozen follow each other in regular succession—keeping as true time as the ticking of a clock. When they emerge, they don't repeat the operation for some time, and fly out of the water with a lazy lagging flap.

Gentlemen often practise rifle-shooting at the geese. The site of some of their exploits was pointed out. One inviting snip of rock juts out upon a line with the walls of the fortress, on which the riflemen take their station. They have seldom long to wait ere a gannet settles upon this point. It was called "Baird's shot," from some steady-handed Baird having frequently perforated his goose. Upon look-

ing steadily at the distance, I could not reckon it more than seventy or eighty yards. Taking everything into consideration, the cool post of the shooter, and the fair position of his mark, a first-rate rifleman ought seldom to miss.

The only small birds I saw on the Bass were a couple of rock pipits, feeding among the withered sea-ware close to the landing bay. Their nest no doubt was near, and they had chosen a place to build it upon, which did not belie their name. Those inheritors of dilapidation and decay, the jackdaws, sum up the zoology I noticed on the Bass Rock. The old rampart walls and chapel had most likely tempted them over the sea from Tantallon Castle. Having satisfied my curiosity, and procured all the specimens I wanted, we hoisted our sail and steered for Canty Bay. Numbers of the common gull were flitting about us on our passage, although I had seen none on the Bass.

When stripping the solan of his best fly-feathers, old Jack remarked that the wing-pinions were excellent for writing-quills. He had often commissions from the village teachers in the neighbourhood for a supply. There was a good deal of oil about them, which the schoolmasters extract by cutting off the ends of the quills and soaking them in warm water. I took out my penknife and made one or two into toothpicks; upon which Jack assured me that I would find them "far praeferable to a prin" (pin).

There can scarcely be a more inviting resting-place than Canty Bay; a cheerful sunny beach of smoothest sand, enclosed by rising hillocks covered with wild flowers; the bold ocean-waves rolling before, and the bolder ocean-rock in full view. I now joined our party there, who had been busy giving books, &c., among the few cottages which lie in one sheltered corner. A poor man, whom reason had left, lay basking on the grass with a number of children playing all round him. He seemed gentle and kind to *them*, though no others dared to interfere. Sorrow had left its deepest traces on his poor old mother's face. Suffering of many kinds met our eyes; and we were painfully impressed with the contrast between the outer forms of nature and these poor wrecks of humankind.

WILD-FOWL SHOOTING ON THE HIGHLAND LOCHS.

THE exciting nature of winter shooting on one of our large Highland lochs, if well frequented by water-fowl, can hardly be conceived by a stranger to the sport. It, in fact, partakes so completely of the nature of deer-stalking, that a man who is an adept at the one would be sure, with a little practice, to be equally so at the other. I should have been astonished to find this amusement so little followed by gentlemen, had I not sometimes witnessed the bungling manner in which they set about it: it is, indeed, as rare to find a gentleman who knows anything of this sport as a rustic who has not a pretty good smattering of it. The reason is obvious. The squire, who may be a tolerable shot, is all eager anxiety until he can show off his right and left upon the devoted fowl; while the clod, having only his rusty single barrel to depend upon, and knowing that if the birds should rise,

his chance is greatly lessened, uses all the brains of which he is master in order to get the sitting shot; and knowing also, from experience, that the nearer he gets to his game the better his chance, spares no trouble to come to close quarters. He will crawl for a hundred yards like a serpent, although he should be wet through, reckless of his trouble and discomfort if he succeed in his shot.

I shall now suppose the squire by the loch-side on a fine winter morning, dressed perhaps in a fantastic shooting-suit, with a Newfoundland retriever of sable hue. He sees a flock of fowl well pitched on the shore, which most likely have seen both him and his dog, and are quite upon their guard. He looks round for a few bushes to screen him *when near* the birds; and then, with a sort of half-crouching attitude, admirably imitated by his canine friend, advances upon his game. Unless the place is particularly adapted for a shot, the flock have probably seen him appearing and reappearing several times, and whenever he is sufficiently near to alarm them, fly up together, to his no small chagrin. But should he *by any chance* get near enough for a shot, his dog, not being thoroughly trained, will most likely either show itself, or begin whimpering when his master prepares to shoot, or, in short, do something which may spoil the sport; and even supposing the better alternative, that the sportsman should have no dog at all, and be within shot of his game, he will, in

all probability, either poke his head over a bush when going to fire, or make a rustling when putting his gun through it, and so lose the sitting chance.

Now for the few hints I have to offer. It may be thought that none were wanting, after the subject of wild-fowl shooting has been so well and fully discussed by Colonel Hawker; but I have never seen any suggestions to show the beginner how to proceed in winter shooting on our large Highland lochs; and many a man may have it in his power to enjoy the recreation in this way, who has neither opportunity nor inclination to follow it in all its glory on the coast with a stanchion-gun and punt.

The man who engages in this sport must be of an athletic frame and hardy habits: he must not mind getting thoroughly wet, nor think of rheumatism while standing or sitting in clothes well soaked, perhaps for an hour at a time, watching fowl. As to waterproof boots, they are totally out of the question: the common dyker's boots would so impede your walking, and also be such a hindrance when crawling upon ducks or running upon divers, as considerably to lessen your chance; and the India-rubber boots would in no time become so perforated by briers and whins as to be of little more service than a worsted stocking. The most suitable dress is a light-brown duffel shooting-jacket and waistcoat, as near the shade of the ground and trees in the winter season as possible, your great object being to avoid the quick

ourse, I would sacrifice my chance at other fowl), never use any shot larger than No. 4, as a fair hance at a small bird like a teal might be missed ith larger; and a man should not go alarming the hole shore, firing random shots at flocks of fowl early out of reach on the water.

Next in importance to the gun is a proper re-iever.[1] The Newfoundland is not quite the thing:

es, dun-birds, widgeon, tufted and scaup ducks—my charge never ceeding 1¾ oz. of shot. It was a curious fact that there were fewer oopers that winter than in many of far less severity. Scarcely any me to Loch Lomond at all, and I did not see one, though I looked r them in all their most likely haunts. During the severe winter 1837-38, not one wild goose of any description was seen, although ere were numbers of the common wild swan, and a few of the black ecies, one of which was shot: so much for the uncertain movements wild-fowl. All the finest birds are to be found in the largest flocks wild-fowl: the smaller birds, being driven away, make little flocks their own.

[1] My first attempts at shooting were in pursuit of wild-fowl when ite a boy, and I still consider it superior to any other sport. In these rly days, however, I had no idea to what perfection a retriever might trained; if the dog took the water well, and was close-mouthed, I pected no more. As I was always obliged to lead him by my de, he often spoiled my best chances, either by showing himself, or mpering me when crawling over difficult ground. I was at last so sgusted with these encumbrances, that I generally dispensed with eir services, and trusted to my own resources for recovering the lled and wounded. The consequence was, that the greater propor-on of the latter always escaped, and unless the wind was favourable, t a few of the former were drifted away. On one occasion I was olish enough to swim one hundred yards into the loch, in the iddle of winter, after a golden-eye, and had some difficulty in re-aining the land. I had watched it for some time, and at last ucceeded in getting to the nearest point on the shore. The golden-ye, however, was diving a long shot off, as these shy birds not nfrequently do: without once considering that the wind was blow-

first, his black colour is against him—brown is much to be preferred; then, I should wish my dog occasionally to assist me in this inland shooting, by beating rushes or thick cover up creeks, where you may often plant yourself in an open situation for a shot, and your dog put up the fowl, which are almost certain to fly down past you. If you accustomed a Newfoundland to this, he might, from his strength and

ing strong from the shore, I fired and the bird dropped dead. To my great chagrin, it was blown rapidly out into the rough water. What was to be done? Had it been able to make the slightest effort to escape, I could have allowed it; but there it lay, still as a stone. So, throwing off my shooting-jacket and shoes, I plunged in, waded up to the neck, and struck out for my prey. By the time I reached the bird, it had floated fully a hundred yards; but getting its leg between my teeth, I wheeled about for the land. My difficulties now began, for the waves were very high, and dashed right into my face. Several times, during my slow progress, I determined to leave the golden-eye to its fate, and as often braced myself up again, unwilling to have so cold a bath for nothing. At last I neared the shore, got into calm water, and, after sounding once or twice, struck ground, and reached *terra firma* with my prize, the leg of which I had nearly bitten through during my exertions. It was an intensely cold day about the end of December, with frequent snow-showers; and had the golden-eye not been the most valued of the diving race, I should never have made such a fool of myself. I arrived at home quite benumbed, determining no more to act the part of a retriever.

Another stormy mid-winter day, a farmer sent to let us know that a flock of wild swans had appeared off the shore. My brother and I instantly started with our duck-guns. When we had reconnoitred with glasses from a rising ground, we saw that the flock were resting some hundred yards from the land, but had little doubt, from the high wind, that they would soon seek its shelter. We accordingly chose different stations, and, crawling to them with the utmost caution, waited patiently for upwards of an hour. At last the swans, by imperceptible degrees, and much turning and wheeling, neared the shore opposite my brother; but the water being shallow, they began to feed as soon as their long necks could sound the bottom. He

vivacity, learn the trick of breaking away when you did not wish him. The best and most efficient kind of dog for this work is a cross between a water-dog and large terrier — the terrier gives nose, and the water-dog coolness and steadiness. I should say that, before you can procure one which upon trial may prove worth the great trouble of thoroughly training, you may have to destroy half-a-dozen. You

was thus forced to rush down to the edge, and take the distant shot. One lay badly wounded: had the wind been blowing towards the shore, the swan was so disabled that it could not have made head against it; but as it blew sideways, the creature managed to paddle itself out into the waves, every now and then uttering its wild piping cry. There was no boat nearer than a mile; we, however, set off at full speed, and, with a shock-headed urchin at the helm, launched into the deep. The wind was blowing a perfect gale, the waves lashing over, wetting us to the skin; and every time we changed our course, we were in danger of being swamped. We had almost given up hope, especially as the white foam of the bursting waves was so exactly like the object of our search as to prevent our distinguishing it at any distance, when the "gillie" at the helm sang out, "I hear him!" All eyes were strained in every direction, and the poor swan was at last seen rising over the billows like the spirit of the tempest. There was much difficulty, and some danger, in getting it safe on board; and in all probability we should never have perceived it, had it not betrayed itself by its dying song. My retriever would have recovered both these birds in five minutes, and there would have been no risk of his spoiling the shot beforehand.

My two youngest sons went to Islay last January (1880) for a few days' wild-sport. One of them knocked over two Bewick swans, right and left; while his brother, who chose the other end of the loch, had the good fortune to kill a third, about a hundred yards distant, with his rifle. These were their only chances at swans. They were the guests of Mr Campbell of Balinaby, a most kind and hospitable host—one of those tough sportsmen of the old school, who had in his youth killed a seal with a smooth bore. When it was being secured, another head peeped up, and was fairly hit by the second barrel; while both seals were got on board before sinking.

should begin your training when the dog is *very young;* and if you find he is not turning out as you could wish, seal his fate at once. The dog you want must be mute as a badger, and cunning as a fox: he must be of a most docile and bidable disposition; the generality of this breed are so: they are also slow and heavy in their movements, and phlegmatic in their temper—great requisites; but when fowl are to be secured, you will find no want either of will or activity, on land or water. The accompanying illustration may serve to show the sort of dog I mean, being a likeness of the best I ever saw. He never gave a whimper, if ever so keen, and obeyed every signal I made with the hand. He would watch my motions at a distance, when crawling after wild-fowl, ready to start forward the moment I fired; and in no one instance did he spoil my shot. I may mention a proof of his sagacity. Having a couple of long shots across a pretty broad stream, I stopped a mallard with each barrel, but both were only wounded: I sent him across for the birds. He first attempted to bring them both, but one always struggled out of his mouth; he then dropped one, intending to bring the other—but whenever he attempted to cross to me, the bird left fluttered into the water; he immediately returned again, laid down the first on the shore, and recovered the other. The first now fluttered away, but he instantly secured it, and, standing over them both, seemed to cogitate for a moment; then, although

Retriever for Loch Shooting.

any other occasion he never ruffled a feather, he berately killed one, brought over the other, and n returned for the dead bird.

The only other essential to the sportsman is a ss. A pocket-telescope that will command two three miles will be generally found quite large ugh.

Having now equipped our wild-fowl shooter, we l again bring him to the shore. His first object uld be to see his game without being seen himself, n if they are at too great a distance to show signs alarm. To effect this, he must creep cautiously ward to the first point that will command a view the shore for some distance; then, taking out his ss, he must reconnoitre it by inches, noticing every t of grass or stone, to which wild-fowl asleep often ar so close a resemblance, that, except to a very ick eye, assisted by a glass, the difference is not rceptible. If the loch be well frequented, he will ost likely first discover a flock of divers, but must t be in a hurry to pocket his glass, until he has oroughly inspected the shore, in case some more sirable fowl may be feeding or asleep upon it. I ill suppose that he sees some objects that *may* be ild-fowl. Let him then immediately direct his glass o the very margin of the loch, to see if anything is oving there. Should he find it so, he may conclude hat it is a flock of either ducks, widgeon, or teal; hose first perceived resting on the shore, and the

must select the finest old mallard among them, whatever suits your fancy. Directly upon hearing the report, your retriever will run to your assistance and having secured your cripples, you will reload, and, taking out your glass, reconnoitre again; for though ducks, widgeon, &c., would fly out upon the loch at the report of your gun, yet the diver tribe, if there are only one or two together, are perhaps more likely to be under water than above when you fire: but more of them by-and-by.

Another invariable rule in crawling upon ducks is always, if possible, to get to leeward to them. If you have also a bright sun at your back, and in their eyes, your advantage is great. Never forget in your most exciting moments that their hearing is most acute. I have seen instances of this that I could hardly otherwise have credited. One day I got within about sixty yards of three ducks asleep upon the shore; the wind was blowing very strong, direct from me to them, a thick hedge forming my ambuscade. The ground was quite bare beyond this hedge, so I was obliged to take the distant shot through it. In making the attempt, I rustled one of the twigs—up went the three heads to the full stretch; but when I had remained quiet for about five minutes, they again placed their bills under their wings. Upon a second trial, the slight noise was unfortunately repeated: again the birds raised their heads; but this time they were much longer upon the stretch, and seemed more

uneasy. Nothing now remained but to try again; my utmost caution, however, was unavailing—the birds rose like rockets. I never hesitate concealing myself to windward of the spot where I expect ducks to pitch, feeling confident that, unless I move, they will not find me out. I have often had them swimming within twenty-five yards of me, when I was waiting for three or four in line, the wind blowing direct from me to them, without perceiving by any signs their consciousness of an enemy's vicinity.

When the weather is very hard, and ducks are driven to the springy drains, a simple way of getting fair shots, but seldom practised, is, *to make your man keep close to the drain*, and take your own place fifteen yards from it, and about forty in advance of him. The ducks will then rise nearly opposite to you. To walk along the drain is not a good plan, as they will generally rise either out of distance or at very long shots; and if you keep a little way off, they may not rise at all. When the loch is low, the sportsman may often get a capital shot at ducks the first warm sunny days in March, as they collect on the grassy places at the margin, to feed upon the insects brought into life by the genial heat.

But to return to our wild-fowl shooter, whom we left, glass in hand, looking out for divers. He sees a couple plying their vocation fifteen or twenty yards from the shore, about half a quarter of a mile from

where he stands. He selects his vantage-ground as near as possible for a last look before commencing his stalk. Having gained this, he makes his dog lie down, and peeps cautiously until he sees the birds—which will they both dive together; then running forward while they are under water, again conceals himself expecting their reappearance. The great difficulty is always to keep in view the exact spot where the birds come up: once lose sight of it, your progress is stopped, and in recovering your advantage, the birds are almost certain to see you and fly. When within one rise of the divers, cock both barrels, and as soon as they again disappear, run to the nearest point on the shore for a shot. If the day be calm, the rising bubbles will show where they are; you can then clap your gun to your shoulder, ready to fire. Always in such cases shoot on wing, and be sure to fire well forward. Should a diver only be winged, it is useless to tire your retriever in pursuit; but if he is at all struck about the legs also, a good dog should be able to secure him.

So much for the small morillon. The golden-eye is a much more artful bird, and requires more caution. If, without seeing an enemy, he is at all alarmed while diving near the shore, he will probably swim out to a considerable distance—reconnoitring all the time, and making a noise something like a single note of the hurdy-gurdy. You may perhaps expect his return and wait for him; but although he may remain

about the same place, making these calls, and apparently careless, he is all the time very suspicious; and I only once or twice, in my whole experience, knew him return to the spot where he was first discovered. Should he get sight of you, there is no hope, even if he does not take wing, which he most likely will. The little morillon may return, if you think him worth waiting for. I have called this bird the morillon, although for nearly thirty years I have detected it to be the female golden-eye. Before making this discovery, I fancied the immature male golden-eye to be the female; and having sent one to be preserved in a case with an *old* male, was surprised to be told it was a *young* male. I then sent eight morillons for inspection, which all proved to be females. Mr Baker, the bird-fancier, told me there were two morillons in the Regent's Park in 1851, which for some years showed no signs of adopting the adult plumage of the golden-eye. No doubt they were females.

When several are diving together, you must get as near as possible without alarming them; and, selecting a couple who dive at the same moment, hoot away the others, who will be far out of reach before their companions come up. They will probably never miss them until they have taken two or three dives, thus giving you an opportunity of getting the shot; of which you would have a much worse chance while they were together.

In recommending this, be it observed, I am supposing the ground of difficult access; when favourable, even a novice should be able to get within a run of any number of fowl, without being seen by the most wary of the flock, and can then make his selection. For my own part, I hardly ever adopt this plan; but where the ground is bare and open, an unpractised wild-fowl shooter would stand no chance otherwise.

When the flock is large, it always puzzles a beginner to ascertain the length of time they are under water, in order to know what time he may *safely* allow for his last run, which in such a case must generally be a long one. The fowl are continually coming up and disappearing again, which confuses him; and *unless he knows the depth of the water*, the only way to find out how long they are under is to watch the most marked or detached of the flock, and then choose his devoted pair. *If the water is very shallow*, those below are sure to perceive the flurry made by their friends at the top, as soon as you commence your last run, and instantly join them in their retreat. In such cases it is always best to try for a distant sitting shot, from the nearest refuge you can safely reach, among as many as you can get in line. But by attempting this, there is always a risk of losing the chance altogether, and it should never be resorted to except under such circumstances, or with *dun-birds*, who keep more close together, and thus pre-

sent a better opportunity for a heavy sitting shot than any other divers.

Of all wild-fowl, a flock of dun-birds is the most agreeable to the sportsman's eye. They are the most stupid of all the diver race: I have even seen them, after having been driven from their feeding-ground, return in the face of the shooter, who had only lain down, without any covering or concealment whatever: they have begun diving again within thirty yards, and of course given him an excellent shot. I never wish for assistance in manœuvring any other kind of water-fowl, but these may be herded like sheep; and if they are feeding on one side of a bay, you have only to conceal yourself at the other, and send your man round to where they are diving. They will most likely come straight towards you, and, again beginning to feed, will probably every five or ten minutes draw all together with their heads up. Now is your time to fire, if you have the good fortune to be within shot; but should you prefer two birds in the hand to waiting for their knitting together, you may have a capital right and left when they come up from diving. I, however, should be loath to lose the opportunity of the sitting shot.

But the case quite alters when dun-birds have been fired at once or twice. Like deer under similar circumstances, they become most wary and suspicious; and although, upon the first appearance of the flock, a novice may easily procure a heavy shot, yet, after

they have been surprised by the leaden shower, the most dexterous wild-fowl stalker may often be baffled in his attempts to approach them.[1] This should make the owners of wild-fowl lochs most particular to keep all quiet near the feeding-ground of large flocks of fowl, but especially of the dun-birds.

I may advance another claim why the first arrival of dun-birds should not lightly be disturbed—viz., the supply of food they cast up for other wild-fowl. Widgeon and ducks feed upon the blades which float on the surface of the water, after the roots have been torn up from the bottom, nipped off, and devoured by the dun-birds. They are thus unwittingly made to minister to the wants of their poorer brethren. When, therefore, the sportsman sees a tempting flock of widgeon in attendance upon their purveyors, who have been scared away from the shore, to dive on a too distant shallow, it is of no use to wait for them; for, be the wind ever so keen, the widgeon will not leave the plentiful supply of grass food cast up by the diving birds. But with a cutting wind and no dun-birds to depend on for food, ducks, but especially widgeon, never try the patience long ere they seek the shelter of the shore.

There are many other divers that frequent our

[1] When dun-birds have been so persecuted as to frighten them away to try fresh feeding-ground, they are again not difficult of approach until fired upon in their new quarters, when they become wilder than ever.

lochs, such as the tufted and scaup ducks, &c., but they may all be approached in the same way as the golden-eye and morillon; none are so shy as the former.[1] Those that feed on fish, such as the goosander, speckled diver,[2] merganser, &c., require rather different tactics. To get a shot at any of these, you must watch which way they are feeding, and, taking your station somewhat in advance, wait until they pass you: they will not keep you long, as they

[1] I had once a good opportunity of contrasting the artful and suspicious nature of the golden-eye with that of the more confiding morillon. When shooting wild-fowl on the banks of the Teith, I discovered, with my glass, a golden-eye feeding at the top of a long creek, and a couple of morillons at the bottom where it joined the river. As they were at some distance from each other, it was impossible to keep an eye upon both. So knowing that if the golden-eye got a glimpse of me, he would not stay to take another, I was obliged to trust to the simplicity of the more social morillons. I got within a fair distance for my last run, when the morillons, who had caught a transient glance at my manœuvres, paid the compliment of giving me their undivided attention; but as they did not leave the ground, nor show any other sign of alarm, I was congratulating myself that all was safe. The moment, however, that the golden-eye came up from the dive, he perceived that the morillons were resting on their oars, and instantly was on his guard. It was most curious to see the cunning and tact of the creature, which I had every advantage for observing, as I was well concealed. He kept cruising about with outstretched neck, peering first on one side of the creek, then on the other, always selecting the best points of sight to halt and make his observations. Nor would he recommence his repast until the morillons had set him the example. And had I not known his usual precaution of making the first dive or two, after being scared, very short, he might even then have escaped.

[2] The black-throated diver is sometimes met with on our lochs. My brother shot a young one on Loch Lomond. I killed another bird of the year out of a flock of six, but unfortunately let off the old drake, a tree having intercepted my shot.

are very rapid in their movements. Take care that the water is pretty deep where you place yourself, or they may dive at too great a distance from the shore for a shot; but after all, they are good for nothing but to be stuffed for a collection.

The only other bird that requires a separate notice is the mighty hooper, monarch of the flood. To get a shot at the wild swan is the great object of the sportsman's desire: he is not naturally so shy a bird as the wild duck, but still his long neck and acute sense of hearing render great caution necessary. If, as often happens, he is feeding along the shore, you have only to plant yourself in an advantageous situation a good way ahead, and it will not be long before he makes his appearance; but if he is feeding at the mouth of some brook or stream, you must crawl in the same way as when after wild ducks. Should you get within a distant shot of a hooper, and are not close to the water-side, instead of firing from where you are, rush down to the edge of the loch, and before the swan can take wing, you will have gained from ten to twenty yards upon him. When the thaw begins after very hard weather, they are almost sure to be feeding at the mouths of any mountain-burns that run into the loch. Should you see hoopers feeding greedily, nearly out of range of your gun, in place of taking the random shot, try to prevent their being disturbed, and return at dusk of evening or grey of morning, when they will most likely have

come pretty close to the shore, especially if any little rivulets run into the loch near: this rule applies to most water-fowl. If a swan be alarmed by an enemy on shore, his wont is not to fly, but to swim majestically away.

Widgeon and teal are approached in the same way as wild ducks, only the widgeon are less shy than the ducks, and the teal than the widgeon. You may sometimes, in calm weather, see widgeon in a large flock purring and whistling a couple of hundred yards from the shore; you need give yourself no trouble about them, as they will probably not leave their resting-place until they feed in the evening. Always try to get a heavy shot at widgeon, which, with a little patience, you may generally accomplish. Teal are usually in small flocks; so that if you can get two or three in line, you had better fire, for fear of losing the sitting chance altogether. I once killed six at a shot; but except when they collect in small ponds and drains about the loch-side, so good an opportunity seldom occurs. I have occasionally seen shovellers on our lochs; but only in the hardest winters. They resemble wild ducks in their habits: the only one I ever shot was among a flock of ducks.

Good sport need never be expected when the loch is large, as many of the fowl swim up creeks, and among the morasses in-shore, where it is difficult even to get a flying shot; while those that remain on the margin of the loch are so concealed by the bushes,

&c., that it is quite impossible to see them. The lower the loch the better; at all events the shore should be clearly defined. At such times, wild-fowl have always favourite haunts for feeding and resting.

There is a common saying that specimens of all the different kinds of water-fowl which frequent the loch in winter present themselves during the harvest moon. This is erroneous: for even the morillon, earliest of the diver tribe, seldom appears so soon; and the tufted and scaup ducks, dun-birds, &c., never until the winter sets in. Multitudes of wild ducks do come down from the moors during harvest to feed upon the corn-fields on the banks of some of the larger lochs, and, when the stubble becomes bare, return to the moor-lochs until these are frozen over, which again drives them back. This is the only foundation for the vulgar error. A day or two is generally sufficient to freeze over these little lochs, and their occupants then come down to the larger ones, the greater parts of which remain open long after the storm has set in. Now is the time for the wild-fowl shooter: if the ground is covered with snow, so much the better. The fowl are then in groups close to the shore, pinched with cold and hunger, seeking shelter and a scanty morsel. If at the same time it is windy, with drifts of snow, no weather can be more propitious for ducks, widgeon, teal, and all wild-fowl that feed at the margin. When the snow is falling thick and fast, a capital sitting shot may

sometimes be obtained, though the ground be so bare as to offer no concealment. In most cases, however, it is best not to take the cover off your gun till the shower moderates a little, as snow is apt to penetrate and make it miss fire.

In open weather, the higher the wind the better, as it drives to the shore whatever fowl are upon the loch, although, until the frost sets in, they will be comparatively few.

The most auspicious weather for divers is one of those frosty days, accompanied by mist, when the loch is perfectly calm, and looks like a mirror dimmed by one's breath. You may then hear their plash in the water—sometimes even before they can be seen; and if care is taken to make no rustling among the bushes when they are above water, you have every prospect of a good chance. The smoothness of the surface and the mist make each bird appear twice as large as it is, which enables you much more easily to catch sight of them coming up from the dive. The mist is also an excellent shroud if the ground is open, without a tree or bush to hide behind when the birds are above water.

The wild-fowl shooter must never forget that the true proof of his skill consists in obtaining *sitting* shots, and stopping a number of fowl at one discharge; and, unless with divers, he must not think of a flying right and left.

THE PEAT ISLE.

A SQUARE flat island on Loch Lomond, called Inch Moan, but familiarly known as "The Peat Isle" (from the people of Luss having liberty to cast peats there), is a favourite resort of every kind of wild-fowl. At a little distance it appears almost level with the water, on which account, as well as from its mossy formation, it abounds in swamps and morasses. This may partly account for the partiality of the wild-fowl to its shores. But there are stronger reasons still: the retired, wild character of the place, seldom visited by man, except for an occasional boat-load of peats, added to which the shallowness of the water at the edges, growing deep so very gradually, is most favourable to their feeding. In the season, the further end of the island, having a grassy margin and bottom, is much frequented by flocks of wild ducks and widgeon; on many occasions I have put up not less than a thousand in one company. In the severest weather,

the sea-eagle continually resorts there to prey upon the wild-fowl; and so voracious is it at this time, that my father's gamekeeper had his water-dog nearly drowned by one of them when retrieving a wild duck. He managed, however, to shoot the erne, the talons of which were long preserved as a trophy. I have seldom done much execution there with my gun, from the difficulty of approaching such a multitude of eyes over a dead level, where there is not a bush or tree to serve as a screen.

When the hoopers come to the loch, they are generally first observed at this part of Inch Moan; but to get a shot is next to impossible, as they can sound the bottom at the distance of several hundred yards from the land, and seldom feed nearer. They are also excellent watchmen for the fowl resting on the banks, and it is astonishing to see the quickness with which the latter notice the slightest sign of alarm shown by their white sentinels. But although I have had many disappointments from the aforesaid causes, yet by watching them at a distance with my glass, I have taken many a lesson in the habits of the birds, and got useful hints for future operations.

Wild swans may be called the connecting link between surface ducks and bottom-feeders; for although, like the former, they never totally submerge, yet by sinking half their bodies and turning up their tails, they are enabled to reach the bottom at a depth which entitles them to be classed as bottom-feeders.

A short distance from the shore, perhaps, may be seen a flock of tufted ducks, diving at longer or shorter intervals, according to the depth of water; seldom appearing at the top without their mouthful of grass, which is cunningly watched by a stray mallard or two, ready to pounce upon the prize the moment it is seen. The mallard, however, but rarely succeeds in his piracy, as the divers generally manage to gulp down their mouthful. At last, tired of the bootless chase, the plunderers join their comrades at the margin, contenting themselves with what may drift there from the feeding-ground of the divers.

In very severe weather, especially during a snow-storm, both ducks and widgeon are apt to trust to the diving tribe as their purveyors. It would be difficult for any one who has not witnessed it, to imagine the supply left by a flock of dun-birds on a lee shore. I have seen as much as a cart-load drifted on not more than fifty yards of coast.

The wild duck sometimes feeds by diving, but this is only in spring, after pairing. The dives are very short, and it is probable that at this time they are feeding on some water-insects which they could not find at the margin. In winter they never feed farther from shore than where they can sound the bottom, by sinking their heads and turning up their tails, like the domestic duck. An artificial supply of food will sometimes cause moss-ducks to collect in small flocks on running streams. The river Gala flows sluggishly

just below the town of Galashiels, bringing down the refuse from the houses, and here I never missed seeing ducks in hard weather. They stuck to the place most pertinaciously, although I repeatedly fired at them from behind a wall and killed several. I solved the mystery one morning by finding half a potato, neatly peeled and cut for the saucepan, in the bill of a mallard I had just shot. So I perceived that this spot was a kind of nucleus round which a quantity of the rubbish had collected.

But I have flown far away from my island, where, in summer as in winter, there is always some rare and shy sojourner. At the end of some long point, immersed to the feathers in the clear water, stands the patient, lonely heron, waiting till the shoal of incautious fish, which the warm sun has brought to the shallows, begin curiously to nibble at its silvery legs; when, striking down its harpoon bill, with far greater certainty than a leister thrown by the most skilful hand, it rarely or never fails to draw up its victim. Not far distant, and perched upon an archipelago of rocks, may be seen the snowy-breasted herring-gull, while its mate is floating upon the glassy deep. At the sound of a footstep, they both extend their sluggish wings, and soar high into the air with loud and discordant scream—a pretty sure sign that the nest is near. This call, not altogether unlike the barking of a dog, may be heard for miles around, and is to be considered a note of alarm rather than of defiance.

Herons and a great variety of gulls hatch every year on this island, or near to it.[1] We have often tamed the young of both, and it would be difficult to say which is the more voracious. I have seen half-a-dozen perch at a time, which had been instantly swallowed, dorsal fins and all, by one of these young gluttons. As soon as their wings grew they wandered away, and would not suffer themselves to be secured until they were half famished. The gulls would often be driven back by extreme hunger to the place where they were usually fed; the herons, even in this state, had always to be turned home, tempted by a fish or piece of raw flesh which was held out to them. After getting hold of one by the above stratagem, I was amazed to see it throw up a land mole, which showed the straits to which it had been reduced. Another, which I winged about the end of November at the foot of a drain, cast up three or four grod-shed trout. How it had caught them at that season, I should like to know.[2]

The young gulls are very fond of slugs, &c., and two kept in my father's kitchen-garden were of great use in destroying such creatures. They require more solid food, however: but these dainties appear to come in as a dessert. The nests of the herons are always

[1] Formerly there used often to be a brood of black-game on the Flat Isle, but of late years grouse have always hatched at the far end of it: this I believe they do on no other island of the loch.

[2] In the winter of 1837-38, I shot five fine specimens of the heron. None of them had any food in their crop.

on a tree or ruin; those of the gulls on a dry sandy piece of ground on the island. The red-breasted merganser, and the goosander, may be seen in the summer, but they are constant visitors in winter,—the latter sometimes scattered along the shore in flocks of fifty and upwards.

But the most interesting summer immigrant is the curlew. There is a melody in its two wild notes that carries an indescribable charm over the calm waters or the lonely moor. It generally makes its appearance a little after the green plover, and both hatch on the island every year. By imitating the curlew's cry, I have often arrested its flight, even at an immense distance, and brought it wheeling round my head for some minutes together. In early spring it is generally most clamorous, and continues so until it leaves the inland moors and lochs for the sea-coast with its young brood. The chicks run very soon, but are so difficult to find, that upon some of our Lowland moors I have counted at least a dozen pairs of old birds, yet have not stumbled on a single young one. As I was returning one day from fishing, my old dog found and pointed a couple, which I transferred to my creel, and had dressed for the table. They were nearly full grown, but could not fly a yard. The young curlews are great annoyances to the gamekeeper, from the facility with which they elude even the best-trained pointers. The dog is continually touching upon their scent, which distracts his attention from

game; but he scarcely ever "*winds*" one, to make amends for this waste of time. Before the 12th of August, however, all the curlews have left.

Many years ago an eccentric man was tempted to raise a house on the Peat Isle. He put up four substantial walls, but stopped payment at the roof, and this edifice, so far as it goes, still stands, a monument of his folly. It has often, however, been useful to us as an observatory for wild-fowl.

The sheep-pasture of this island is peculiarly rich, and always in great request among the farmers. It is seldom, however, that its quiet is disturbed by the presence either of a shepherd or his dog. Should any traveller chance to read this description, and look down upon my lowly island from one of its commanding neighbours, no doubt he would wonder at my selection. There is, indeed, no waving copse, no rocky height, with its varied view, to entrance the summer visitor, but it has to me even a greater charm in its wild and lonely seclusion.

For the last few winters, the wild sport on Loch Lomond has much deteriorated from what I recollect it in former years. The frosts have never been so long-continued nor so severe as to tame the fowl, and bring wild swans or geese.[1] Besides, the soft rainy

[1] It was very different in my boyish days, when our harder winters often froze the loch completely over, and secured us plenty of northern refugees. I have a perfect recollection of the white forms of the hoopers before our nursery windows. On one occasion my late father, who was not much of a sportsman, and only an

weather of the west has prevailed so much, rendering the loch large and full, that the few water-fowl that do frequent it at such unfavourable times, have all kept to the shallow water on the eastern side. But should a frost set it, the shallow parts of course are first frozen, the loch falls rapidly, and they come pouring over to our side. Every day brings fresh numbers both from the shallow coast opposite, and from the moor lochans, now frozen up. In January 1848 there were only ten days of frost, and in the preceding year about the same amount of continued hard weather. I spent the best days of both seasons on the loch, and shall endeavour to show what the admirer of wild-fowl shooting may expect upon such expeditions.

There are three excellent ranges for wild-fowl, all beginning at Rossdhu House. One, down to the old water of Fruin, called the Mid-Ross shore, is a great resort of widgeon and ducks: it extends along a flat, grassy, lonely coast, with fine screens of whin and broom. Another takes in the whole shore as far as Luss: it is full of weedy bays and green points, and is much frequented by dun-birds, tufts, scaups, and morillons. The third range comprehends the islands

indifferent shot, loaded his common fowling-piece with "swan-post," and killed in the bay behind the house two swans with his first barrel, and one with his second—all fine old birds.

Some years ago, a young hooper made a presentation of itself to the Zoological Gardens of Edinburgh. It flew into the wild-fowl pond of its own accord, was secured, and pinioned. It lived nearly two years, and I have frequently seen it.

—viz. Inch Moan, which I have just described, Inch Tavannach, and Inch Connachan: the narrow passage between these islands, called the Straits, is a fine shelter for all wild-fowl from the hooper to the teal. And lastly, the Castle of Galbraith, a very small island, although it has no feeding-ground, makes a good resting-place for ducks at mid-day. When they are detected there, in fancied security, with their heads under their wings, and one leg tucked up comfortably into their breast-feathers, it is the most certain opportunity for a sitting shot. There is also a fine view of Inch Moan, and part of the Straits, from the top of the ruin, once the yearly resort of the osprey, and which I never ascend without regret for having murdered her on her own threshold. From the top of this ruinous castle, the best haunts of the wild-fowl on the adjoining islands may be commanded with a telescope. Tradition says that a sort of wild man, called Galbraith, domiciled in the old castle; and being a most expert swimmer, as he had much need to be, used to strike out for Rossdhu House, take the roast off the spit, tie it round his body with a string, and return in triumph to his island. When a boy, I was much horrified at this account, and used to picture a sort of half-demon, half-maniac, breaking into the house, the inmates flying right and left, while he marched to the water with his smoking booty.

I will now recount the adventures of eight days' duck-stalking, beginning *Friday, January* 21st, 1848.

rosty, but not very hard. Took the Luss beat, loch not being low enough for Mid-Ross shores, nded by gamekeeper, with a little wiry hairy ever that looked as if he could stand as much as a polar bear. No fowl of any kind on Luss es, so embarked for the islands. Detected the le mass of tufts, dun-birds, morillons, &c., diving feeding together on the Inch Tavannach side of Straits. Saw it would be a most difficult stalk, that, from the nature of the ground, I could only flying right and left. So it turned out: a long it brought me within a distant run—could get earer, so chose a pair of tufts, as being closest to . Watched their simultaneous dive. Made my nd dropped both. Took boat for Inch Moan, as traits were now cleared of fowl for this day. three moss-ducks on a green point of the south A long stalk, and distant chance. Dropped one, however, rose again and made off. Came o north coast of the island. Nothing but a k, which I shot for a specimen. In the far to the west, keeper spied what we thought a diving, but when I advanced I saw it was a . Dropped him dead; a long shot. No l seen to-day—total, five head.

y, 22*d*.—Embarked at ten o'clock, and aight for the Castle of Galbraith, as the ot pinched enough to frequent Luss shores. he castle, and had the satisfaction of twig-

[illegible] a mud-mallard, and slew [illegible] Mid-Ross. [illegible] head.

[illegible]—[illegible] and misty as yesterday. [illegible] two chances (they certainly [illegible] made it all chance [illegible] which I stalked by sound [illegible] on Mid-Ross shore. [illegible] When returning, stumbled [illegible] dead. This evening a [illegible] head.

[illegible]—[illegible], with a little wind. [illegible] About a mile before we [illegible]-ground, a heron rose out of [illegible]. Fired, and dropped her [illegible] A [illegible] omen! As soon as we [illegible] Brae, which commands a long [illegible] of Mid-Ross, saw three ducks and a drake feeding [illegible]. A very easy stalk. Wounded two ducks [illegible] with my first barrel, and, had not my second [illegible] by accident, would have killed the mallard in all likelihood. Dick, the retriever, secured one of the wounded; the other made away. The next chance was a flying right and left out of the old water-course of the Fruin. Killed a duck, and mortally wounded a drake. Both long shots. Marked down the drake, which separated from the flock. With my glass I perceived a fine phalanx of widgeon closely wedged on Fruin Point. A bare and difficult approach over the long promontory, and very few

bushes to hide me. Could not get nearer than sixty-five yards. Had to fire lying flat on the ground. Only one lay.

Rested for an hour, to give the fowl time to come in-shore for the evening feed, and then returned over the same ground. Keeper discovered, with his telescope, a mallard near where the wounded one pitched. Had no doubt it must be him. A very difficult approach. When I neared him, found he had a couple of ducks with him, so was sure it could not be my victim. In attempting to get a fair sitting shot, they saw me, as the ground was bare, and flew up at sixty yards. I did justice upon the polygamous chief by killing one of his ducks. Did not obtain another chance till near the end of the beat, when I saw a couple of widgeon feeding in a weedy creek, and killed both at one shot. Six head and a heron.

Thursday, 27th.—Clear hard frost. This morning a fine fleet of dun-birds sailed into Rossdhu bay, the first that had appeared there since the winter began. The keeper and I were soon on the *qui vive*. They were diving within a near shot, on the opposite side of the bay. When I succeeded in getting within fifty yards, a piece of white ice gave way under my foot. They did not see me, so only ceased feeding and paddled out into the bay. I knew they would soon return, so kept my post. Unfortunately, they neared the shore further down the bay; and, as I saw they would not move from the plentiful table that had

scattered them. I hedged back, and came round above. Fired right and left: a longish shot. Four lay, one only wing-broken. Dick retrieved the trio, but I only got a glimpse of the other close to the beach.

We now started for Mid-Ross. Spied a trip of five widgeon from Auchintulloch Brae; they were greedily feeding a few yards from shore, close to a fine screen of whin. Waited long for three in a line, as they were scattered. At length I succeeded in getting them placed fair. Only the centre bird lay; the swelling waves saved the others. By aid of telescope, saw a fine batch of teal on old Fruin Point again. Precisely the same stalk as yesterday; the teal were, however, nearer than the widgeon. Killed four, and did not see any wounded. Gave the customary hour's law of rest, and then returned. Keeper perceived a duck and drake in the first bay after crossing Fruin Water, on our way home. A good shelter within forty yards of them, which I easily reached. Killed the mallard sitting on the beach and the duck flying out upon the loch. Only one more trip of widgeon on the shore; a very long shot from the nearest ambush. Fired right and left, sitting and flying, without bringing down a bird. Ten head.

Friday, 28*th*.—A heavy snowstorm all day. Did not leave the house.

Saturday, 29*th*.—Keen wind and hard frost. Snow a foot deep. A famous day for water-fowl. Thought the weather sufficiently severe to bring the fowl to

Altochly, Camstraddan, and Luss shores, so determined to try these before the islands. Saw three widgeon feeding on the green surface-food in Rossarden bay. As they were out of shot, did not wait, intending to give them a benefit on my return. A couple of moss-ducks were grubbing in Altochly bay, two yards from the land. With difficulty obtained a long right and left. The first I fired at sitting, the other flying. The No. 4 flew all about the sitting bird, but she did not seem hit; the other fell dead, to Dick's delight. Proceeding a little further, we were encouraged by a distant view of the dun-birds busily at work in Camstraddan bay. A long, intricate, and dangerous crawl, from the birds being very scattered, brought me within a run. Sorry to see that they were diving upon a bank at an uncertain distance. Selected the nearest two, and made my run. Fired the moment they topped the water; both fell, one dead—the other fluttered away into the waves, and was soon lost sight of. Keeper, meantime, had got his eye upon a solitary morillon, a short way off, which was under water when I fired. The ice prevented the bird getting so near the shore as he evidently wished. Easily stalked him, and made the first dead miss since the commencement of my sport. Meant to shoot him on the wing, but he would not fly until I was in the act of taking a poking sitting aim; spread his wings at the critical moment of pulling the trigger, and, in fact, flew away from the leaden shower before it reached

[illegible] did not waste my second barrel upon so [illegible] game, but had a good laugh at his escape. [illegible] Rossarden, two of the widgeon [illegible] close to the shore, the other remained [illegible] from Rossarden wood, [illegible]

[illegible] When about a mile off, [illegible] one on the north [illegible] side of the island. Of [illegible] flock by stalking the [illegible] When I neared [illegible] they were so dispersed that I [illegible] barrel. Wounded [illegible] the rough water [illegible] the other with [illegible]

[illegible] collected in the north-[illegible] Made a long and careful [illegible] and dropped four [illegible] three. Dick had [illegible] managed to escape. [illegible] our game; we, [illegible] of merillons in Inch [illegible] nearest point with-[illegible] their heads at the same moment. I killed one, but the other flew into [illegible] Nine head.

[illegible] sketch, the rough [illegible] into the shelter of the

bays to-day; also the waves prevented the wounded from being either seen or retrieved.

Monday, 31*st*.—Delightful weather for wild sport; keen frost and calm. The same range as yesterday. Only a solitary duck on Rossarden to-day. Poor thing, she was taking advantage of the few slant rays of sunshine for a siesta! A massy rock, which towered about forty yards from her resting-place, was easily gained. She was standing on one leg, with her bill under her wing, the very picture of repose, which I don't think I broke, as she never moved after she fell off her green cushion into the water. Saw the dun-birds, but they were also at rest midway between the islands and the shore. Settled to pay them a visit at dusk, when we were sure they must be at supper in Camstraddan bay. In the meantime to search the islands. Saw some little black lumps on Galbraith, and, with my telescope, made out a small flock of ducks. It always inspirits us to see them on this island, as, with good management, a fair shot can generally be obtained. We pulled silently past, until we got the castle between us and our quarry, and then, by slow and noiseless strokes, we reached the strand. The brushwood was so thick that, although I had only about twenty yards to creep, it took me nearly half an hour before I was placed fair for my shot. They were quite dispersed and asleep; so, as my second barrel was useless, from the thicket in which I was en-

ging a shoal of dun-birds busily feeding on the no
shore of Inch Moan. Immediately set sail, and lan
on the south side, under cover of the roofless hou
Surveyed the flock through my glass, and was a lit
let down to see three ducks on the shore close un
the dun-birds. The chance of a heavy shot at
latter materially lessened by the ducks. Waited
see if they would decamp, but they were hungry, a
would not quit the weeds drifting in from their divi
friends. Leaving gamekeeper in the house, I tool
crouching stretch along the south shore, and, as
ground was dry and hard, did not grudge a long ha
and-knee crawl across the island. Neared the no
shore without disturbing their operations, and, wh
within fifty yards of them, got my eye upon the m
plot ducks, about thirty yards from me. Could eas
have strung them all. The dun-birds were feedi
in circles of from twenty to thirty yards in circumfe
ence. They were now at the farthest point, and I,
course, waited till they came to the nearest, whic
brought the mass to within forty yards. Fired int
the middle of them. Six lay dead at my first di
charge, and two dropped from wing at my secon
Three swam away, two only wing-broken, but t
third badly struck in the body also. The keeper pr
dently did not slip the retriever, but instantly ran
the boat: he, too, had marked the mortally wound
bird; so, after securing the eight fowl, we follow
in pursuit, and drove him ashore into a bush

Inch Tavannach. I put my hand into my pocket for my powder-flask, to load, in case he might dash out into the water again. No flask was there! I had left it on my dressing-table, when charging my gun before coming out in the morning. Nothing now for it but to slip the retriever. Before he could reach the bush, however, the wary bird rushed out again upon its native element. Down under water, but the dive was a short one. Dive after dive—shorter and shorter. At last it could not get out of sight, and I soon picked up the ninth dun-bird to two discharges. When it is borne in mind that my charge did not exceed an ounce and three-quarters of No. 4 shot, and that the dun-bird is nearly as large as a duck, and decidedly the most hardy bird to carry away shot of all the *Anas* tribe, any expert wild-fowl shooter will at once perceive how rare a piece of good fortune a shot of this kind is. It was therefore without much grumbling that I rowed to Rossdhu for my powder-flask, a distance of about two miles. When we returned to Inch Moan, the day had worn on. I got a flying right and left at widgeon, on the far end of the island, killing both ways.

It was now late, so we sought the mainland, and I emptied my gun at a fine roebuck passing close to me in the dusk. My No. 4 told well, and he fell dead without a struggle. Eleven head, and a roe.

Monday, 24th.—Mist so thick that stalking was out of the question. Calm. Frost hard, and ground

in the evening, without seeing sometimes seven or eight together, feeding on the coarse weedy grass torn up by wild-fowl, and drifted to the beach.

Ducks and widgeon generally keep the lee shores; this, however, need not disconcert the stalker, if he only does not let them hear him. I have constantly observed that they *wind* you best in calm weather. In high wind never fear their *noses*, even should it blow direct from you to them. My brother had a gunning-punt upon Loch Lomond, and it was well ascertained, and constantly affirmed, by the boatmen, that the approach with the wind was far "shurer" than when working against it. They always, therefore, tried to advance upon fowl with a *favouring gale*. From the smallness of the flocks in comparison with those on the sea-coast, and also from the places where they took shelter being often inaccessible to the punt, it has always been considered a failure on our loch.

On *looking down* upon divers with your head on a level with the ground, take care that you do not fancy them within range of your duck-gun from the nearest point on the shore, when they are a long way beyond it. I have several times, under these circumstances, selected my pair, made my run down the bank to the beach, and found that the distance had been much foreshortened by my constrained view from above. When I got to the level ground, they were quite out of shot.

A wild-fowl gun for Highland lochs should not very weighty, as a ponderous weapon is so unfortable to stalk with. It should be light enough ake smart rights and lefts. The largest charge of e is one ounce and three-quarters of shot, and I pull down snipe and woodcocks with it quite lily. Most people, however, prefer a duck-gun ; will carry at least two ounces of shot.

A breech-loader is a great improvement in ducks, as you have to change the charge so often to erent sizes of shot, to suit the various fowl which ent themselves. Add to which you can load in nfined or recumbent position,—a great advantage. ir chief object being hard killing, a chokebore is e preferred; and there is little danger of an acci-t, as most of the shots will be fired right out g the water. I am far from recommending kebores even for *open* shooting at grouse or part-e, *certainly never for the covert.*

used a breech-loader for two years at open shoot-but as I found my best dogs spoilt by the quick ling I returned to my muzzle-loader. I never saw the man with self-command to keep down dogs long enough to insure their steadiness, who l a breech-loader.

n enterprising young gunmaker, Macnaughton Edinburgh, asked me lately to inspect his new ntion of a hammerless gun. It differs from r hammerless guns in having a glass window,

[illegible] with a pair of pistols is seen if the gun is [illegible]. The weight is lighter than other guns, and the locks are inside the stock on the same principle as the ordinary outside back-action lock. They are placed behind the barrel; whereas in other hammerless guns they are placed below the breech, [illegible] cocked, and working by lifters at or near the [illegible] of action. The lifter in Macnaughton's gun works in connection with the lever. My sons [illegible] a pair of these newly-patented hammerless guns which proved a complete success, and are first-rate guns.

DOGS FOR THE GUN.

My advice on the subject of dogs must begin with the caution, never to lay too much stress on their general appearance. For my own part, I must confess that I am not very partial to the exceedingly fine-coated, silken-eared, tobacco-pipe-tailed canine aristocracy; for, even if their noses and style of hunting be good, they are invariably much affected by cold and wet weather, and can seldom undergo the fatigue requisite for the moors.

The most necessary qualifications of a dog are travel, lastingness, and nose. The two first are easily ascertained; but the other may not be found out for some time. I have seen dogs shot over for a season without committing many mistakes, and on that account thought excellent by their masters: their steadiness, of course, has been shown, but they have given no proof of first-rate nose. Even a good judge may be unable to form an accurate estimate of a dog's

olfactory powers until he has for several days hunted him against another of acknowledged superiority. The difference may then be shown, not by the former putting up game, but by the latter getting more points. Should there be no tip-top dog at hand to compete with, the only other criterion, though not at all an infallible one, is the manner of finding game. The sportsman must watch most narrowly the moment when the dog first winds: if he throws up his head, and moves boldly and confidently forward, before settling on his point, it is a very good sign; if, on the contrary, he keeps *puttering* about, trying first one side, then another, with his nose sometimes close upon the ground, even though at last he comes to a handsome point, I should think it most probable that he is a badly-bred, inferior animal.

Of all dogs, the worst for the moors is what is called a near ranger. Such flinchers may do well enough in preserved partridge ground; but on the steep hillside it is quite sickening to see their everlasting canter, fifteen or twenty yards on each side. The dog-breaker may say that, although the dog ranges near, he is working as hard as his more high-mettled competitor. For my own part, I never saw one travel in that way that either worked so hard, kept it up so well, or *found half so much game*, as a free-hunting dog.

Let your pointers be really good, and a couple will then be quite enough to hunt at a time; more only

umber. If well broke, they will not pass over the r game; and when birds are scattered (the only time en the near-ranging *potterers* are in their element), y will find them one by one, with equal cer- ıty and greater despatch. Many gentlemen, how- r, take no trouble about procuring good dogs, until ; before the season begins, and consequently must up with inferior ones, in which case they are forced hunt three or four together, or they have little nce of finding much game. And a most vexatious ng it is, after all, to see these cross-bred, ill-broke s, uniting their efforts to annoy;—one putting up ds, another finding none, while a third contents nself with admiring the feats of his companion! What's Bob doing?" "Nothing." "What's Dan ing?" "Helping Bob!!" Aware of what he has expect should he be unprovided, the knowing man the moors has always as many *good* dogs as he ı work himself, and never suffers them to be hunted shot over by another.[1]

The purchaser, before taking the trouble to try a g, should make sure that he has a hard, round foot, well set upon his legs, symmetrically, though rather

[1] The only way to hunt two couples of dogs at the same time, with- risk of slacking their mettle, or otherwise spoiling them, is for ı couple to be commanded by a separate keeper, and at a sufficient ance apart to prevent interference. The sportsman can thus move a one to the other, as they find game. I, however, always prefer ting my own dogs, and never suffer them to be spoken to by any until I have fired, when I trust to my man to enforce the "down ge" *without noise.*

[illegible] the great thing is the head. It [illegible] between the ears, which should [illegible] a [illegible] before the eyes: the [illegible] very soft [illegible]. If these points are present, the dog will [illegible]. The above remarks [illegible] as I greatly prefer [illegible] if the sportsman has a scanty [illegible] recommend the latter, as [illegible] capable of undergoing more fatigue [illegible]. For my own part, however, I [illegible] the pointer so much more docile and [illegible] that I seldom use setters: [illegible] of which, as there are so many [illegible] differing in appearance from each other, it would be useless to lay down any rules.

Many gentlemen, when the shooting season begins, are [illegible] taken in by dog-breakers and others. How [illegible] difficult it is to know a good dog [illegible]. The breaker shows his kennel, puffing [illegible]. The sportsman [illegible] one or two dogs that suit his fancy: they [illegible] the sound of the [illegible] and perhaps get [illegible] when birds are so tame that no dog but a [illegible] could possibly put them up. The bargain struck, the dog paid for: but when fairly tried, [illegible] shows his [illegible] in finding game. I have seen the breaker look round with an air of the greatest triumph if a hare should start, and his dog not chase

This, as may be seen, is a very old dog.

this is what any man who understands the elements of breaking, by a little trouble, and by taking the dog into a preserve of hares, can soon effect.

Other obvious defects, such as not quartering the ground, hunting down wind, not obeying the call or signal, the veriest novice in field-sports will immediately detect. It is not, however, with faults so apparent that dogs for sale are generally to be charged. They are, for the most part, drubbed into such show subjection, that the tyro fancies them perfect, and only finds out their bad breeding and nose after a week's shooting.[1] To assist the judgment of the uninitiated, I have given accurate likenesses of the two best pointers I ever had. I know some faults might be found in them, but they have all the main requisites.

If your dogs are well bred, the great secret of making them first-rate on the moor is, never to pass over a fault, never to chastise with great severity nor in a passion, and to kill plenty of game over them. There are two faults, however, to which dogs, otherwise valuable, are sometimes addicted; these give the sportsman great annoyance, but may often be more easily corrected than he is aware. One is the inveter-

[1] Dogs of this kind remind me of an anecdote I remember to have heard from a brother sportsman, but for the truth of which I cannot vouch. Walking out with a highly-broke pointer, he suddenly missed him, when he presently espied him soberly and submissively following the heels of an old guinea-fowl, whose reiterated cry of "Come back! Come back!" he had thought it his duty to obey!!

ate habit, contracted through bad breaking, of running in when the bird drops. This trick is acquired from the breaker's carelessness, in not *always* making the dog fall down when birds rise, a rule which should never be neglected, on any pretence. *The steadiness of a dog, whether old or young, depends entirely upon its being rigidly observed.* After the fault of running in is once learned, the quickest remedy is the trash-cord and spiked collar; but many gentlemen buy dogs before shooting over them, and commence their day's sport without these appendages. They are thus obliged either to couple up the dog, or run the risk of having any birds that remain, after the pack has risen, driven up, and those that have fallen mangled by him. I have seen dogs most unmercifully flogged, and yet bolt with the same eagerness every shot. It was easy to see the reason: the dog was followed by the keeper, endeavouring to make him "down;" there was thus a race between them which should reach the fallen bird.

The plan to adopt with a dog of this description is, when the grouse drops and the dog darts forward, never to stir—coolly allow him to tear away at the game until you have loaded; by which time he will most probably have become ashamed of himself. You will now walk up most deliberately, and, without noticing the bird, take the dog by the ear, and pull him back to where you fired, all the time giving several hearty shakes, and calling "down." When you get to the

spot where you shot from, take out your whip, and between the stripes call "down" in a loud voice; continue this at intervals for some time, and, even when you have finished your discipline, don't allow the dog to rise for ten minutes at least; then, after speaking a few words expressive of caution, take him slowly up to the bird and lift it before his nose. If this plan is rigidly followed for several points, I never saw the dog that would continue to run in at the shot.

The other defect is chiefly applicable to young dogs: it is when they trust to their more experienced comrade to find the game, and keep continually on the outlook expecting him to do so. Nothing can be done for this but to pay the greatest attention to their point; selecting it in preference to that of the other dog, and always firing, however small the chance of hitting the bird. Also change the dogs they hunt with as often as possible. Young dogs, with this treatment, will very soon acquire confidence, and never keep staring at their companion, unless he is settling upon a point.

When the sportsman rears his own puppies, he should be most particular, not only about the acknowledged excellence of the sire and dam, but also that their breeding is unexceptionable and *well known*—especially that there is no cross of the rough, *however remote*, when breeding pointers, and no smooth blood when setters are the object. It sometimes

happens that a dog, though not well bred, may turn out excellent; but the progeny of such dog or bitch hardly ever do so. This double caution is therefore most necessary, as otherwise much time and trouble might be spent upon a dog that never would be worth it, from a mistaken idea that, as his parents were so good, he must *in the end* turn out well too.

To cross pointers and fox-hounds, or setters and spaniels, for the sake of improving the noses of the former, or the travel of the latter, seldom answers. The one qualification *may* be gained, but the dog generally loses in every other.

In choosing young puppies, it is no bad plan (as the free-tempered and high-couraged generally turn out the best) to whistle out the litter, then strike your hands smartly together above their heads: the timid will at once shrink back. Give the preference to those who show least alarm. A timid sulky dog often grows worse as years increase; but a bold free one improves.

Except in driving game with beaters, there can be neither comfort nor pleasure in any kind of shooting without efficient and thoroughly-trained dogs. Immense prices are therefore freely given for a pup, or even a cross, from any distinguished kennel. Probably a man would be supplied with a really valuable article by applying to any of the celebrated canine dealers; but there are numbers of young and promising gun sportsmen who are eager for the aid of good

dogs without paying a "perfect ransom" for them, and to such I may be allowed to write a few words on the subject.

I do not wish to be *dog*matical in the matter, although to the sticklers for high-caste dogs I must appear *dog-democratic* in recalling old Hawker's advice —viz., "to procure a pup of the best dog and bitch in your own neighbourhood," and the progeny will probably turn out as well as those of more famed ancestry. Of course (as the colonel says) the parents must be so far apart as to prevent any chance of affinity, otherwise the produce may be soft and worthless. I have known a splendidly-bred bulldog in appearance, at bottom turn out an arrant coward from this cause.

After half a century's experience of dogs and shooting (for I began to handle a gun when a schoolboy), I can assure the tyro that the best pointer I ever had was bred from a sire and dam unknown to any but local fame. I have seen in my day many excellent dogs of high pedigree, but never one which appeared to me his equal. The finest setter I ever possessed was bought for £12 from an obscure kennel.

By far the most perfect retriever, both for land and water, I ever knew was also my own, and was the progeny of a water-spaniel and a large wiry terrior bitch. The son was so like his mother that farm-labourers often remarked when passing,

'That's a strong sense.' Yet this dog, for acute sense of scent, sagacity, docility, pluck, and perseverance as well as attachment to his master, was unrivalled. Amongst the numbers of bred retrievers which have belonged to me at different times, the only one that came near him was a large rough mongrel whose sire I bought without trial, as having the reputation of being a first-rate worker. His only points, however, were a good nose, and the will (perhaps no much as nose) to use it energetically. His son can best be described by negatives; he was *not* a Newfoundland, he was *not* a water-dog, he was *not* a rough sheep-collie, but seemed to be a hotch-potch of all three kinds. The dam was a proved and excellent retriever, and her son was her fac-simile in appearance and disposition: as deer or roe he could not be trained.

As springing dogs have now superseded setters or pointers in many of the great game counties of the south, I may mention that the best springer I ever used was a cross between a poodle and a cocker. I paid 5*s.* for the little creature when a puppy; and after a few years' practice she became so knowing, that, besides avoiding raising game out of shot if my attention was otherwise occupied, she always gave a stifled bark to fix it before going in on her quarry. She was otherwise mute, and knew as well as her master that if a bird was sprung unawares to the shooter, he was taken at a disadvantage.

Many young dogs, having every natural good quality ready to be perfected, are ruined by the carelessness or indolence of the breaker in allowing too wide a range when the dog is inclined to take it. A free, active young dog needs especial watchfulness; for, if he is not judiciously curbed *at the very first*, his ranging soon increases to rambling, and when this (in my opinion) worst of habits becomes inveterate, the dog will only hunt his own ground in his own way. When, as constantly happens with a rambling dog (especially on the moors), he gets a point out of sight, and his master is unable to discover his position, he either springs his game or quits it—thus teaching himself to be either a creeper or a blinker.

I have no doubt any dog may be cured of rambling at first by a good-tempered, painstaking breaker; but I never knew one, after he had thoroughly learnt the bad lesson, which would not resort to his old tricks whenever his master's notice was relaxed for a moment. Even should the shooter be always watchful, the dog will not hunt with either spirit or success unless he is allowed his own will. I have tried the trash-cord, even heavily weighted, and every other means, on dogs spoilt in this particular by their breaker, but always without success. I was forced to destroy several for no other fault, and have such a dislike to a confirmed rambler, that of the two I would rather break a pup sluggish enough to need encouragement than one so keen as to require re-

[illegible]. The former is sure to improve rapidly in [illegible] as soon as game is killed over him, while the latter may become even more eager and [illegible] from the very cause.

The [illegible] are not difficult to train if special [illegible] is given at the first to keep them from hunting [illegible]. The whip and dog-call will soon [illegible] into a habit if the fault of wide-ranging is never overlooked through carelessness or indulgence. After a dog learns the lesson that the prey is to fall to his master's gun, and not to be pounced on by himself, unless he is very stupid and worthless, he will be as anxious as the sportsman to gain fair shots, and retrieve the fallen game, whatever may be the nature of the ground.

I know many Scotch terriers as good at this work as spaniels. They never spring game out of shot, have excellent noses, and such soft mouths that they always brought what was wounded alive to their master—which held terriers in higher estimation than other sporting dogs. There is no doubt, however, that their nature is to hunt wider and slower, to be more eager after crippled game, and not to search every tuft and bush with the energy and perseverance of cockers or spaniels.

It is a good rule to avoid hunting pointers or setters along with small dogs, as they tempt the latter to extend their range. I have also found that large retrievers, though thoroughly trained not to "break

shot," are more likely to make pointers or setters unruly at grouse or partridge than those of smaller size, as they are so much more observable in their efforts to find the dead or wounded.

Some sportsmen may say that they never allow their retriever to try for fallen game until their setters or pointers have failed to secure it. It appears to me that such usage might go far to discourage and slacken the mettle of any valuable retriever.

During the long course of my shooting experience, only two retrievers have belonged to me which I considered A 1; notices of their sporting feats are given in this work, but a few words about their tempers and dispositions may be useful to those looking out for such valuable aids to the gun. The first and most perfect of these two dogs was sulky and unsociable. He would acknowledge no master but me, refusing to obey any one else, but all the energy of his rugged nature was used in my behalf with an unwearied devotion which no exactions could tire. As a shrewd gamekeeper observed, he was indeed "a faithfu', faithfu' beast!"

His rough surly face comes before me now, looking up beseechingly for orders when wild-fowl were on the shore, and ready to fulfil them to his last breath. On more than one occasion, after a tremendous swim for crippled ducks, he fell down on reaching land with his prey in his mouth, which only death would have forced him to part with to any one but his master.

[illegible]'s bill, besides [illegible] beggars, and no [illegible] of our home. Yet [illegible] my little children, was [illegible] to pinch his [illegible] indulging in a [illegible] more remarkable [illegible], which, though [illegible] resented any such [illegible] snap. The re[illegible] guard possible [illegible] instead of defend[illegible] have bitten [illegible]

[illegible] different from his pre[illegible] appearance. He was [illegible] Newfoundland dog, though [illegible] a rougher coat. [illegible] was capable of great [illegible]. Although inferior to [illegible] his equal on land at [illegible] he was unrivalled. With the most perfect promptness he obeyed every order, but had no reflection to anticipate his master's instructions like his smaller competitor. Indeed I never met with a dog possessed of this quality in such perfection as old Gruff. The cause might be that the good-natured amiable dog studied to please many masters, while he who was of a morose dis-

position concentrated all his powers to find out the wishes of *one*.

The sire of the large retriever I bought for a good price, as he had the reputation of being a perfect dog. He had, however, been spoilt in breaking, was too rash and hasty, though he had a keen nose and good will to use it. His mother belonged to one of my relations. She was a most valuable retriever, and her son inherited all her good qualities, with others in addition.

Few lovers of shooting have been more careful than I to secure good heather and stubble dogs; but though sparing neither trouble nor money in their behalf, only three have belonged to me which I have considered first-rate, since I was able to handle a gun with effect. During all those years, dozens of excellent pointers and setters have been mine, but some drawback always kept them from attaining the highest rank in the dog line.

Two of my famous trio were pointers, and the other a black-and-tan setter. The former were chosen and reared from the litter; while the setter, as I have already mentioned, was bought when two years old for £12.

Although steady to point, back, and drop to shot the first season, none of them showed their rare excellence till the third, continuing to improve afterwards for some years. The two pointers cost me more care and watchfulness than the setter, which

had the finest and freest temper, combined with the greatest docility, of any dog ever hunted under my eye. The pointers, however, after the fourth year, when thoroughly "made," were rather superior to the setter. One of them lived till his twelfth year, and strange though it may seem, ranged and found game more successfully than ever on his last opening day of the moors! I will venture to affirm that few sportsmen in the kingdom can say as much for so aged and hard-worked a dog.

A dog of the first class should be equally good at all game on hill or dale. His habit should be hunting for birds by wind, but when a hare or rabbit on its form comes in the way, his exquisitely keen nose should be able to perceive the scent at once, and he should point them as steadily as birds. He will never poke his nose on the ground for fur, even if a bagful of footed game fall to his master's gun, and his own finding. Instead of his pace being either very fast or very slow, it will not change from a determined canter, which neither time nor hard labour can subdue. He will instantly see and obey the slightest signal of hand or voice, and when hunting with a comrade, he will not feel jealousy. If single-handed, he will be ready to do his own work, besides that of another. Lastly, his constitution must be perfect, his feet sound, and after the hardest day's work he ought to be able to eat his supper with eager appetite. Such a character is a truthful description of the three paragons to which I have referred.

My numerous valuable second-class dogs would by many have been placed in the first rank. Not a few failed from temper. Some were excellent on heather, but never showed the same zest for turnip, potato, or stubble fields. Others, though capital for lowland work, were apt to slacken their mettle on the hills; and steady as they were at grouse, never showed the same aptitude for finding them as for scenting pheasants or partridges.

Many good sportsmen, I know, object to hunt Highland and Lowland game with the same dogs, and in most instances it may be best to keep to this plan. Indeed my own experience seems to confirm it, when owning, after so many years, that only three dogs equally good at *all kinds of game* have fallen to my lot, and that many a valuable dog may not reach the first rank by deteriorating when his ground and game are changed.

For instance, a grouse dog taken to ground where rabbits are plentiful, after a few are rolled over to his point, may begin to track fur by lowering his crest and getting careless of winged game. In another case, if transported to soft ground amongst snipe, his ardour will be cooled on account of the many points gained with little trouble.

Such temptations made no impression on my three favourites, which could be hunted anywhere and on all game, without the least fear of detracting from their high qualities.

temper to be assured on long experience
gun-shy dogs which crouch to heel in ter
report, may, with a little care and kindnes
cured; while those which bolt home, o
nearly as bad, skulk round hillocks or behi
are simply incurable, and may be destroyed

INSTINCT OF DOGS.

It is often amusing to hear those who know little about the subject describing the "almost reason" of the St Bernard's dog, and not unfrequently of the Scotch collie.

It appears to me that the instinct of these animals is more prominently forced upon people's notice, and that they do not take the trouble to watch and discover in the other species. Sagacity is more equally distributed among the different varieties of the dog than each casual observers are aware of; but it, of course, takes different directions, according to the temper, habits, and treatment of the animal. It would be a waste of time so far to control the keen tempers of sporting-dogs (by which I mean setters and pointers) as to make them perform the duties of a well-broke phlegmatic retriever. The instinctive power may therefore appear greater in one than the other; but in the quiet easy temper of the retriever, it is

much less difficult to develop and make use of his instinct in that particular way: while the setter and pointer, owing to their more active life and hunting propensities, may often pass unnoticed, even by their masters, though every time they are in the field displaying as much tact as the most cautious retriever. Their sagacity is never thought of; and the only praise they get is, that they are "excellent dogs;" which means, *that they find plenty of game.*

There is another reason why sporting-dogs appear more deficient in sense than some others, and that is, their mode of life. Confined always in the kennel, unless when seeking game, all their powers are employed to this end. There are, however, abundant proofs that, when made companions, and suffered to occupy a place upon the hearth-rug, they are capable of the same attachment, and would equal in sagacity the much-lauded dogs of St Bernard.[1] Indeed, the usual mode of imprisoning sporting-dogs is so great a disadvantage, that I have seen some, with excellent noses and every requisite for the moors, grow sulky, and refuse to hunt with their usual freeness, unless left in a great measure to themselves. This, I know, arose partly from a want of proper management, and from not keeping the medium between encouraging kindness and merited

[1] May we not be allowed to suppose the dog in Helvellyn, whose attachment to its dead master was thought a fit subject for their muse by two great poets of the day, was of the sporting kind?—at all events it was not "*of mountain-breed*"!!

correction; for too much lenity is nearly as injurious to a dog as over-severity: sulkiness will often be the effect in the one case, shyness in the other. Still, if the dog were allowed to be the companion of his master, he would acquire both sense and tact in half the time, and would not give half the trouble either by shyness or sulkiness; whereas it will generally be found that a kennel-dog is long past his best before he excels in that sagacity on the moor which so greatly assists him in finding game. Even the veriest village cur, when kindly treated and permitted to bask at the "ingle-nook," will learn all sorts of tricks, many of them requiring as much *reflection* as the most intricate duties of the shepherd's dog. I had a little cocker, reared in a cottage, that of its own accord, when only seven months old, brought in the post-bag, thrown down by the mail in passing. The person who looked after the post having been detained for a short time, was astonished to see the bag safely deposited in the house; and, upon watching next day, saw the little creature marching along with its load. It had seen the bag carried in once or twice, and immediately learned to do so.

I do not mean to deny that some varieties of the dog may excel others in sagacity; but this will be found in most cases to arise from other circumstances than the *natural gift*—and that dogs, whose avocations require a phlegmatic quiet temper, have certainly

the advantage over others, though the instinctive powers of both, in the first instance, may have been equal. A terrier, for example, may be, and has been, taught to herd sheep, and if kept to this employment, would appear more sensible; but his snappish disposition, though an advantage in his own more congenial occupations, renders him unlikely to excel in those of the collie. The latter, again, is admirably adapted for his own work: his thick rough coat protects him from the severity of the weather, to which he is constantly exposed, and his less ardent temper prompts him to look for guidance from his master in all his movements. Both sheep-dogs and terriers may be taught to point, but they are always deficient in *hunt*, and their olfactory powers are never so acute as in those dogs which nature seems to have formed for the purpose. We thus see that dogs are trained to different employments, for many qualifications apart from their instinctive powers, though these may be materially increased or retarded by the nature of their occupations.

The Newfoundland and water dog are generally reckoned paragons of sagacity; but has their treatment nothing to do with this? From their earliest days taught to fetch and carry, and never leaving their master's side, they learn to understand his least signal, and, from constant practice, sometimes even anticipate his will. This is also precisely the case with the collie: made, as soon as it is able, to follow

the shepherd to the hill, and from everyday habit always on the alert to please him, it daily acquires greater dexterity both in comprehending and obeying, till at last it can perform feats that perfectly astonish those who have not seen the gradual process. My retriever, before spoken of, gave many proofs of sagacity which excited the admiration of those who saw them; and yet I did not consider him at all more knowing than the old pointer whose cut I have already given. A superficial observer would wonder at the comparison; but, independent of the tact and ingenuity displayed by the pointer in finding game, I feel convinced that if his educational advantages and temper had been the same as the retriever's, he would have equalled him *in his own beat.*[1]

[1] Both these invaluable dogs have been under the sod for some years. They died of pure old age and hard work. One day, shortly before the old pointer's last 12th of August, a knowing keeper remarked to my man, "Surely you don't mean to hunt *that* dog. Why, he is not fit to walk along the road, let alone travelling the moors." Never was man more "out." According to my custom, I threw off with old Cigar and his comrade at eight o'clock, and hunted them till two, when they were relieved by a fresh pair. I shot till nearly eight in the evening, and bagged thirty-five brace. Fully the half fell to the old dog's point, and I never saw him hunt or find better in his life. It was his twelfth 12th! He died the following spring, and was immortalised by a *dog*-gerel epitaph:—

> "We climbed the rocky hills, and trod the heather,
> And many a 12th of August have we seen together.
> At length thy foot grew weary, age its only clog;
> And here thou art at rest, my poor old dog!"

Poor Gruff died a couple of years after Cigar, but I have never been able to replace him by a worthy successor—at least, by one uniting all his excellences. A Tweed spaniel came the nearest to

To illustrate my meaning, I may mention a feat or two of each: Having wounded a rabbit on the moors when the pointer was behind a knoll, but fancying, from the agility with which it made its escape, that I had missed it altogether, I was surprised to see him shortly afterwards bring a rabbit and deliberately lay it down at my feet. It would have been nothing if the dog had been taught to fetch and carry; but on the contrary, he was, of course, broken to drop at the shot, and never to lay a tooth upon game. Had he seen me fire and had afterwards stumbled upon the rabbit, he would from his breaking have thought he had no business to touch it; but, not having seen the shot, he fancied he had a right to bring what he had himself found upon the moor. Any person who was no judge of dogs would have said, "Why, this is no more than what any retriever puppy would have done." It is not, however, the mere act alone, but the connecting circumstances, which often show the superior instinct of the canine species.

The performances of the retriever are more showy, and the generality of observers would immediately on that account pronounce him the more sagacious dog. In taking a walk with him one winter, I met a friend who had dropped a whip: if this had happened to

him in docility, but, like most of these silken gentry, he is shy of the water in cold weather. Gruff was as hardy in the winter-storm as a walrus. Many years after, I was so fortunate as to possess another retriever, nearly, but not *quite*, his equal. He also is described in this work.

myself, there would have been no difficulty, as I had only to send the dog off upon my track; but, upon trial, he immediately ran back upon that of my friend, recovered the whip, and brought it to me. Another time, when he was following an open carriage, a shawl was dropped; no one perceived the loss until the dog was seen carrying it in his mouth behind. Not long after, a bouquet of flowers was missed: I immediately looked round for the retriever, and, to be sure, there he was with the bouquet most jauntily carried in his mouth. But perhaps the following instance may serve still better to show the influence of temper and education upon the instinct of dogs. Having taken sea-bathing quarters for my family, about forty miles from my residence in Perthshire, I walked thither over the hills, accompanied by my faithful retriever. When I returned for a week's shooting, I ordered old Gruff to remain behind. After waiting three days, and finding I did not come back as he expected, he started off one night about nine o'clock, made his way through the most intricate by-paths and short cuts of all descriptions, across a deep ferry, and arrived at home about five next morning, when he was discovered lying at the door. There are many authenticated accounts of dogs making much more distant journeys than this; but the point to be noticed is, his remaining three days, though perfectly at large, and then taking his departure. A keen-tempered dog would have started the next day, at

latest, or, by having his attention engrossed with oth[redacted] things, have remained quietly where he was. Ev[redacted] in the former case, he would not have gained half much credit for sagacity, as every one must have p[redacted] ceived that the patient retriever waited to see whet[redacted] or not his master would return. Few would give themselves the trouble to remark that his education and apathetic temper favoured him in this particular, and that equal instinct might have been shown in the more hasty resolves and quicker movements of another. It is thus that keen dogs always appear deficient in sense, because they are hurried away by their temper from one thing to another; and their feats are seldom such as to arrest the attention or excite the wonder of the general observer. The instances I have given are merely mentioned as explanatory of my theory—viz., that we are apt to overvalue one dog for sagacity, while we overlook its more unpretending neighbour, because, from shyness, surliness, eagerness of temper, or want of practice, all its powers of instinct and memory are employed in *a different and less obvious way;* for there is no doubt, if a dog is eager, shy, or sulky, it may have superior instinct, and yet *show less* than another of a more phlegmatic, sociable, or easy disposition. This accounts for the difficulty of procuring a good retriever from a cross between the water-dog and terrier, so valuable if the medium between them is preserved; because when the dog partakes too much of the nature of the terrier his

quick temper unfits him for the purpose,[1]—and when too little, he is generally deficient in nose. A cross between the water-dog and any others of the sporting kind would be still less likely to suit; and the Newfoundland is too large, and of the wrong colour. Perhaps (the noses of collies and terriers being pretty much upon a par) a breed between a water-dog and a collie might answer well; there is only the objection, that the progeny might be too large and conspicuous.

With regard to the St Bernard dogs, what is it they do but what almost any dog of *equal strength* might be taught also? It is certainly a noble occupation, but far, I should think, from difficult, to teach a dog to run the track of a man upon the bare mountain, and either guide or carry the benumbed wretch home. The collies in the Highlands do the same when sheep are in jeopardy, and know their own flocks from any others. They will also climb hills and work by the slightest signal from their masters at the foot.[2] All

[1] A dog of a very cool temper will retrieve wild-fowl better in loch-shooting than another with quicker movements and perhaps a finer nose. Many of the cripples in this shooting take refuge in weeds and bushes, and the keen-tempered dog is apt to overrun them, thus losing time; whereas the other slowly tracks them one by one to their hiding-place. It must be recollected that I do not speak of coast and cover shooting, where more agility is required: on the coast, from the numbers to be secured after a heavy shot of the stanchion-gun; and in cover, that wounded hares and rabbits, winged pheasants, &c., may be more speedily retrieved. For my own part, I should prefer the slow dog even in cover; but few sportsmen like to wait.

[2] A shepherd of my late father, celebrated for having the best collies in the country, preferred those with quick tempers, *to save himself trouble*. This man used to stand at the door of his hut,

ever he felt secure of overtaking his game before reaching the sea, he darted off at full speed, rarely miscalculating distance. If the seal was half grown, the dog was often unable to detain it; but a very young one seldom pulled him to the water, until the keeper came up and knocked it on the head. Ross told me he had run down three of these in one day.

REMARKS ON INSTINCT AND REASON.

In order fairly to discuss the theory of some modern thinkers, that the instinct of animals so nearly trenches upon reason as actually to deserve that name, I shall endeavour to analyse the most striking examples of this mysterious faculty of the brute creation which have come under my own observation. Other testimony I cannot now accept, however reliable it may appear to be, without the opportunity of testing it; for I have done so frequently, and have invariably found these startling proofs of mind in animals break down if the evidence was closely sifted.

Out of many others, I shall select one instance to which wide publicity was given some time ago,—viz. that of "Greyfriars' Bobby;"[1] and you can judge for

[1] "Greyfriars' Bobby a lee" (*lic*). When wandering lately in Greyfriars' churchyard I met the old sexton raking the walks. "Do you remember Greyfriars' Bobby?" I inquired—when he answered curtly, "It was a black lee, frae end to end!" *Pace* the late

yourselves whether it would not be waste of time to quote more.

When this curious story first appeared in the columns of a very able daily paper, I at once said, "This is too richly spiced." Letter after letter, each more touching and pathetic than its predecessor, was greedily swallowed by the Edinburgh public; but, strange to say, comparatively few cared to find out for themselves the truth of a tale which had so melted their hearts, but were quite content to trust that the facts were genuine, and prepared to hold that a dog so endowed with human intelligence and feeling, was perhaps better entitled to a monument and an epitaph than many whose names and deeds the churchyard-stones recorded!

On going without delay to Greyfriars' burial-ground, no "Bobby" was guarding his master's tomb; but the sexton said that he often appeared thereabouts. He also volunteered the additional information that a greater piece of wonder-making for the newspapers had never been palmed on the public, for the dog was well fed at an eating-house opposite, was fat and happy when making his rounds, and was certainly no object of pity. I took the trouble to call at the office of the paper alluded to, and told them of the hoax, when the "Greyfriars' Bobby" letters at once ceased.

Rev. Dr *Robert* ("Bobby") Lee of Old Greyfriars'; but the venerable gravedigger was plainly quite innocent of the apt pun on his former master's name and cloth.

Of course the mental power of animals is most prominently forced on man's notice when used in his behalf by the dog, the never-failing assistant of his recreations; but it is equally acute, though more difficult to trace, in the objects of his pursuit, whether bird or beast, whose wiles and strategy to escape capture or death are at least a match for the combined reason and instinct of their pursuers. I therefore maintain that a well-educated, thoughtful, and experienced hunter can pronounce on this subject with more authority, and that his opinion ought to carry more weight, than all the ingenious and subtle theories of modern philosophers, who often have recourse to the Esaus of the field for their most telling facts, and can easily strain these facts to suit their preconceived views.

After upwards of forty years' experience of a mountain hunter's life, and having possessed as sagacious and affectionate dogs as could be procured for money, or reared and trained by care and pains, I see no reason to retract what I wrote more than thirty years ago, that there is not so much real difference in the original instinct of different breeds of the dog; but that kind and careful teaching and companionship will instigate any dog to exert all its powers of instinct and memory in behalf of its master, while a neglected cur may waste equal abilities on its own selfish ends.

An Italian greyhound belonging to one of my family has never been taught anything, and looks

silliness itself; yet this uneducated foreigner is every bit as knowing, when closely watched, as the best-trained dog I possess. On one occasion she hid a bone in a hedgerow, carefully covering it over with grass. Soon afterwards I saw her sneak slyly to the place, and after being convinced that the top-dressing had been tampered with, she cautiously removed the bone to a distant clump of shrubs, burying it with more than usual care. On going to the place I could not find out where the bone was buried, so artfully was the treasure this time concealed.

"Myrtle" has been dead for some years, and is succeeded by an ancient-looking toy-terrier, aptly named "Granny." This little creature has been allowed to finish her own education, and of course it has been centred "all in self." On a winter day, it pulls a cushion from beneath a sofa, and after smoothing all roughnesses with nose and paws, places it before the fire, lying down luxuriously for a siesta. In summer, when there is no fire, the cushion is drawn into the rays of the sun; and as Phœbus rolls on, she jumps up, making the cushion follow his course. This might be called "*almost* reason" by some masters, and "*quite* reason" by many mistresses!

Before giving examples of what people sweepingly call the sagacity of animals, I would mention that most wild creatures, and tame ones also, enjoy two senses, sight and hearing, more acutely than man;

and that a third mysterious power is given them called "scent," which man does not possess at all. The sense of smell, which fine ladies often feel far too keenly for their own comfort, is widely different. But this power of scent enables animals to pursue their prey—to find out their friends and avoid their foes, by tracing the most hasty footstep, even through a thick shoe, on the ground. I shall explain my meaning better by-and-by, when I illustrate it by instances.

All men have conscience, down to the vindictive cannibal of the Libyan desert. The brute has none. The second-best retriever I ever had worried in the kennel a splendid setter dog, his constant companion on the heather or stubble-field, who fed out of the same dish, and shared the same couch. On the morning after the foul deed was done, he came out wagging his tail as if nothing had happened—hunted all day with the greatest glee—ate a hearty supper, and slept after it like a sloth; yet this dog's memory was marvellous, but it was the memory of instinct—not of reason.

One day when shooting with my son in Mull we knocked over three old black-cocks. Not having a gillie that morning, we hid them in the heather, and shot on for several miles. Being belated, we returned by the highroad, and when opposite the hidden game signed to the retriever to fetch it. Without a moment's hesitation he crossed a good stretch of moss, found and brought the three birds one by one—in

fact, making three trips in as short time as we could have made one. Years afterwards, when shooting on the Loch Fyne mountains by myself, I sent my gillie home with a full bag towards evening, intending to carry my own game till the close of the day. On the slope of a hill I rolled over a large red hare, hid her in fern by the "snib" of a knoll on the bank of a moor burn. By many turnings and windings I shot my way to the top of the hill, and when my game-bag was pretty well replenished, I struck the source of the brook, followed its course until I felt sure I had reached the knoll where puss lay stiff, but was fairly beat to find the exact spot.

Auk lay down, watching my perplexity with a vacant stare, and I had just persuaded myself that the hillock had been inadvertently passed on our coming down from the high ground, and was bracing myself for a weary climb back, when I thought of my unsympathising follower,—"Heigh, fetch!" Away he cantered down-hill until he reached a hillock at least a quarter of a mile underneath, dived his head among the ferns, and came trotting back with the hare. Now, mark the difference between reason and instinct. A young child, had it known where the hare was concealed, would have volunteered to show the place. The old sagacious dog, *unless desired to fetch it*, would have followed his master home and left the game to rot on the moor. This dog in his prime could pull down a wounded full-grown deer,

and I once saw him hold a large *unwounded* roe till we came up and secured it. The following instance of resolution at eleven years old was certainly a wonderful exploit for his time of life. We went out to some rough coverts for rabbit-snapping, when Auk cantered off with the wistful earnest look which we knew was a sure sign he had scented roe. We had unfortunately no larger shot than No. 5, so I felt uncertain of a drop, when a report rang through the pine-wood 200 yards from my hiding-place. Presently a large doe crossed out of reach. I watched her steal into a thicket of underwood and granite boulders, and at the very gully we expected, up she rushed with the old dog at her haunch. The doe, dashing away at her best, soon left him in the rear, but we knew the trusty old fellow would not give in while he had a leg to follow. Through the wood they took their headlong race, and were soon far out of sight. We all chose different routes, but mine was the right one, for on reaching the edge of the plantation an old lame carpenter gave the welcome greeting that "the hoond had pulled down the rae." He and a fellow-workman had been repairing a paling, when the chase rushed by, coming soon to close quarters. His companion, though young and strong, dared not interfere, but old lame seventy-six felled the roe with a blow of his hammer. "Mun! didna' he look awfu' whan he sprang at the rae agin and agin, and then pinned her to the grund?"

The retriever just alluded to worked with us eleven years. He was of a social, kindly temper, and retrieved for any of my sons quite as pleasantly as for myself. I bought his sire from Mr Hill of Edinburgh for £12, but he was very inferior to his son, who inherited his best qualities from the dam. I now possess a son of his, Curly by name, an excellent dog, much resembling his parent in every respect. The chief differences are, that his sire Auk had straight in place of curly hair, and was of a much larger and more powerful build.

Some years ago, Curly was following my son in Melville Street, when a very respectable and rather dignified sexagenarian passed with his smart walking-cane. My son having forgotten his that morning, Curly, with the most perfect *sang froid*, took the old gentleman's stick from him and presented it to his master. The old boy was, however, equal to the occasion. "No apologies, sir—pray, no apologies; I am accustomed to dogs: that is a fine fellow of yours —a very fine fellow; and he took my cane so gently too." And so off marched the old gentleman with his recovered property, highly tickled, and evidently prepared to tell his adventure with great effect to his friends.

My retriever Gruff has been already mentioned—and one Sunday morning at Helensburgh, I shut him up into the parlour when we went to church. As the room was on the ground-floor, and the window

open, he jumped out and followed us. On my signing him to go back, he quickly rejoined us with a large Bible in his mouth. This was set down by the people going to church as "the sense of a man." It was, however, simply a bit of his ordinary work. Running back to the house, he sprang in at the window, took the last article I had touched, and returned with it. Had this been a handkerchief, a glove, a walking-stick, or a Bible, it was all the same to Gruff. When a friend walking with me dropped anything, and I sent Gruff back, he would retrieve as readily as if the article had been let fall by myself. So would any of my well-trained retrievers. On one occasion Gruff recovered a gold-headed cane, and another of my retrievers a glove, which my friends had lost. Both dogs had to return at least a mile for the missing things; and I never knew either of them fail to find and bring whatever was dropped, let the distance he had to canter for it be ever so great.

As proof that the memory of dogs is purely mechanical, I mention the following curious facts:— We had driven from Leny to Loch Awe for a week at the *Salmo-feroxes*, and Gruff was allowed a seat on the box the greater part of the fifty-mile journey. As he might have been in the way when a fish was hooked, he was told to remain at the fishing-inn of Cladich. The night being fine, we did not return till after dark; and the people told us that he hung about all day, but at nightfall suddenly disappeared. It

was thus evident that darkness had destroyed his last hope of our coming back to temporary quarters, so he at once determined to follow us home. It was a week ere he found his way to Leny, very jaded and footsore, a distance he could have run the same night had he not missed the road many times. The cause of his blundering was very apparent. He had been seated on the carriage-box in place of running by its side, when we drove from Leny to Cladich, and had thus only a hazy idea of the roads and turnings in place of *seeing* them, which was the same as having them impressed on his memory.

Many years before, a little mongrel was attached to my father's luggage-carts at Edinburgh, and made to follow them to Rossdhu, a distance of seventy-three miles. Two days after, when released for its supper, it bolted, and appeared next morning at its former master's door—a gardener close to Edinburgh. This ugly cur found its way right through Dumbarton, Glasgow, and several other towns, running the seventy-three miles in ten hours. Whereas Gruff had few turns of road to confuse him, no towns, and only fifty miles to run; yet from not seeing many of the objects on his first journey, as the little turnspit did, he was wellnigh beat to find his way back. The Red Indians, and other savages, in their boundless forests, being forced to keep alive acute observation, acquire much of the mechanical memory of animals; but when civilised, and taught the use of the compass, &c., there is far

less need of ever-vigilant watchfulness; so the memory of instinct gradually gives place to the memory of reason.

When God has thus endowed His dumb creatures with such wonderful powers of instinctive memory, coupled with a quicker eye and keener ear than man, it is not surprising that on trial the reasonable being often finds the subjects of his dominion more difficult to capture or to slay, than before making his first inexperienced untrained attempts he could ever have conceived. But to the brute its Creator has given another subtle sense called "scent," by which friends are discovered, foes eluded, sustenance obtained, and security strengthened.

That the power of scent is quite superior to, and something different from, the common sense of smell, there are abundant proofs forced upon the notice of every one who follows a hunter's life. Of numberless constantly occurring instances I shall only cite one or two, fairly conclusive (I think) in favour of the theory that has been hazarded.

Whenever I had shooting-grounds in the wilder parts of Scotland where deer or roe abounded, I always kept a first-class fox-hound to force them out of the larger woods where hill-foxes commonly sheltered. I have often winded, so strongly as to be perfectly offensive, the haunts where Reynard had been resting or rolling on the grass, while the hound would scarcely acknowledge the tainted air by a single whimper. A

few hours afterwards, perhaps, when my nose could not detect the faintest trace of a fox, the hound would start off full cry, *ventre à terre*, head up, tail down, showing to a demonstration that the scent was "breast-high."

When the Highland fox-hunter's pack were running their quarry on my father's hills, an old cunning hound snuffed a putrid braxy sheep. Quitting the fox, he gorged himself with the stinking carcass, and rolled on it till he was a perfect abomination. He then picked up the abandoned fox's scent, hunted out the track magnificently, and was the only hound that stuck to it until Reynard was forced to ground in a huge cairn. The stench of this dog was so disgusting, and his body so filthy, when triumphantly guarding the beaten enemy in his sanctuary, that it seemed a marvel how he could distinguish any perfume but what he carried about himself!

I was often puzzled as a boy by a frequent performance of my father's old-fashioned breed of setters. The dogmatic old gamekeeper would never train a retriever except for loch duty, and so he made up for it by teaching his ranging dogs to "fetch and carry." Not unfrequently, when bringing a dead or winged grouse to the shooter, they found a fresh scent, and stood to it with their mouthful undelivered, until the new game was raised and shot at. How the (often live) bird, within an inch of his nose, however acute, did not most effectually prevent a dog from winding other

birds at a distance of twenty yards, I must still own is beyond my comprehension. If the power of scent was analogous to our sense of smell, I am sure such would be the effect.

Wild creatures are perhaps even more keenly endowed with this (to them) *safety sense* than tame. The distance that buffaloes on the prairie, wild asses of the desert, and our own mountain deer, can wind a human enemy, is wellnigh incredible, except to those who have proved it. Experienced trappers, also, are fully aware that it is even more necessary to deceive the noses than the eyes of their intended victims, and so they use various methods to destroy the scent left by their hands after placing the well-hidden snare.

Ranging dogs show quite as much sagacity as retrievers, although, from the routine nature of their work, it is less obtrusive. I had at distant periods two pointers so well broke as never to lay a mouth on game, and when I followed up a winged bird they caught it with their paws. When a struck bird dropped dead out of sight, these dogs, if they stumbled on it, would fetch it in their mouths until they made sure I saw their burden. They would then instantly drop it, often at long distance; and although I tried every stratagem to coax them to retrieve to my foot, I could never persuade them to take up the game a second time. Their affection and instinct carried them so far as to prevent my losing

the bird, but they could not understand that an exception to the rule of not mouthing game in my presence was now permitted. I have gone some distance to see if they would retrieve the bird again when out of my sight, but they would never acknowledge it after the first effort.

We have now a setter bitch that taught herself to retrieve, and that acts in the double capacity of ranger and retriever. She was so timid at first that the sight of a whip would most likely have made her blink game. After a few partridges had fallen to her "set," and she was encouraged to follow a wing-broken bird, she quietly lifted it and fetched her prize *alive* to the shooter. Of course she is not permitted to follow or lift ground game, but on all birds is as effective as a finished retriever. Had she ever been punished for "mouthing" like the pointers, no persuasion could have tempted so shy a creature to touch either killed or wounded game.

Attachment to his master and love of amusement are the rough materials which man uses to bring out the natural qualities of a well-bred dog. When the dog's master, be he monk of St Bernard's, shepherd, or gamekeeper, is what we call "a good breaker"—having patience and judgment both to encourage and to correct—there is little doubt that every breed of dog will learn to exert all its powers of endurance, memory, sight, hearing, and scent, to please and assist his teacher. Bloodhounds, fox-hounds, harriers, bea-

[illegible] all show wonderful tact and perseverance in their vocation; but it would be absurd to expect the same devotion to their master from a whole kennel of dogs always lodged and hunted together, as when only a limited few are the associates of his rambles and recreations.

That animals have a sort of freemasonry among themselves is the only solution of a catastrophe in my kennel which happened in Mull. Effectually to destroy the host of grey crows which infested that island my keeper poisoned the carcass of a tempting fat sheep, while his only companion, a valuable Scotch terrier, sat watching his proceedings. Just before feeding-time that evening, this terrier and my best black-and-tan setter were missing. About an hour after, the terrier came staggering to the lodge and rolled over dead. Instantly suspecting the cause, the keeper ran to the "braxy," and there was the setter lying stark by its side. The little dog had brought the big one more than a mile to share with him the feast, and been ungratefully treated for his pains. The selfish setter, no doubt, refused his kind purveyor a share until he was himself gorged; so the terrier was only beginning his meal when the setter fell dead. The tragic scene at once frightened him off, having taken so little poison as to be able to reach home ere he succumbed.

At once I gave orders that no more carcasses were to be poisoned; but soon after I left my shooting-

quarters, a shepherd pointed out to my watcher another dead sheep, conveniently close to a rock islet, whither he volunteered to assist him in conveying it. All shepherds are the mortal foes of "hoodies" and "corbies," as they peck the eyes out of weakly sheep and lambs; so on my man telling him he was not allowed to poison the crows any more, he vehemently protested that "the dog who would invade the island for the sheep wad be *cheap o' his death.*" This dictum was conclusive. The bait was set; but one of the best-trained collies in Mull was at the shepherd's foot and forming his secret plans. At midnight, when the tide was low ebb, he sneaked away, swam or waded to the islet, and soon lay dead upon the rock, a grim satire on his master's bravado!

Farmers and shepherds are full of stories to prove the marvellous memory of a favourite collie. Laddie or Yarrow, when he has once travelled a road even of a hundred miles with his woolly charge, will never forget a single "slap" or "common" where the sheep have given trouble, but is always ready to face "the drove" at the critical points, and prevent them from playing the same pranks a second time.

Memory in wild creatures is, if anything, more keen and retentive than in tame. Stags will shun the corrie, and seals the rock, where they have been touched by a rifle-ball; and if they ever return to the post of danger, they approach it most warily, and keep a far stricter look-out for long days to come.

About as retentive and vigilant remembrance of danger as ever excited my wonder, was exemplified in a royal bird. Much coveting a sea-eagle for my museum, I drove to a moor loch where the eagle had fixed her eyrie at the top of a fir-tree on a tiny islet. A forester rowed me to the island, where I was carefully hid at the tree-foot, and then he pulled for the mainland. The eagle, never suspecting an ambush, soon perched on the rim of her nest, where but for my massive covering I could easily have shot her. There was nothing for it but to wait till she settled on her eggs, which she soon did. Removing the brushwood as quietly as possible, I stood up under the tree. My accomplice slowly rowed back; but when the eagle on his approach left the nest, her quick eye detected me, and in her surprise and fright she twisted and wheeled until nearly out of reach. As soon as she flew steady I fired, dusting out some tell-tale feathers, and the bird laboured over the loch, severely but not dangerously struck.

The pair of eagles haunted the ground till the following spring, when they built their eyrie on an oak-tree in an island of a neighbouring lochan. We did not disturb them this time until the eaglet was hatched, when I was again concealed by bushes and fern. Remembering the first ambush, and connecting it with this fresh one, she refused to alight on the eyrie, although her nestling was perishing from cold. It was impossible she could have seen me; for an

inquisitive kestrel lit on the twigs within half a yard of my face, peered all round, yet never detected the croucher, who could without difficulty have seized the feathered Paul Pry by the legs. From nine A.M. till two I waited in vain for the shot, and when we scaled the eyrie the young eagle was dead! Had not the dread episode in the eagle's life of the preceding year been stamped on a memory that never forgets, she would have been as fearless and unsuspicious of danger as the kestrel.

The intelligent reader will most likely have concluded for himself, without my pointing it out, that the eagle's tenacious memory was purely instinctive. Had there been the least touch of reason in all her cautious watchfulness, she must have noticed two men in the boat when it was rowed to the islet, while only one pulled back to the mainland. Where, then, could his companion be but in dangerous proximity to her eyrie? But so far from this wary bird having any such misgivings, I am convinced that if the cobble had contained several enemies, and all of them but the return rower been hidden close to her nest-tree, she would have confidently come back to her eggs. Take the converse. If half-a-dozen men had rowed to this island, and the whole crew *swam* back to the mainland in full sight of the bird, not even maternal affection could have induced her to return to her treasure so long as the cobble was moored to the strand.

When God made the inferior creatures He said, "Let the *earth* bring forth the living creature after his kind;" but when He created man His words were, "Let us make man after our own image; and He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." Twice are we expressly assured of our dominion over every living thing, and the charter of our superiority is reason.

NATURAL HISTORY AND SPORT OF BUTE.

A RATHER curious speculation has sometimes amused me. Had rare old Gilbert White been a sportsman instead of a naturalist only, and had he rented grouse-moors, should we have gained or lost most by this metamorphosis? No doubt 'Selborne,' the most charming and classic of sketches, might have been less perfectly filled up; but, on the other hand, if the keen and philosophic eye of this magic painter caught but a passing glimpse of what hundreds regard no more than the "idle wind," what curious theories might have been started, and in what beautiful language would they have been handed down!

Power of pitching his tent in the remote wilds, and of removing it as his fancy may prompt, is the great boon given to the sportsman-naturalist by the present universal system of leasing shooting-ground. A goodly number of our keenest and best sportsmen are naturalists also; and when to this accomplishment

is added an enthusiastic love of scenery, their enjoyments are greatly enhanced. For the last forty-two years I have been one of these autumnal wanderers, and have rented shootings not only in the north, south, east, and west of Scotland, but also in the islands, thus having the opportunity of comparing different districts of the country, and of noting, by the effects of climate, &c., on its various fauna, the slight causes which often diverge into wide results.

One of my abodes, the romantic old Castle of Kames in Bute, supplied me with an interesting field of amusement and research in the study of that island, chiefly by noticing the absence of birds and creatures familiar enough in many of my other quarters, or the presence of some rarely met with in rougher districts, but tempted to a summer sojourn in this genial clime.

One of my previous shooting-quarters having been in Mull, a comparison of the two islands was a natural and interesting subject of thought; for although both were situated on the west coast, and flanked by mainland mountains which wooed the Atlantic mists, there was yet a very perceptible difference of climate, which the zoology of the islands quite bears out.

To begin with the lowest order of animal life, I was much surprised never to have encountered one adder in Bute during the whole period of my lease. In Mull these reptiles perfectly swarm; and during the dog-days I have counted half-a-dozen in the course of a single forenoon. They seem to thrive as well

as multiply—many which I stumbled on along the shores of Loch Baa being of immense size. One of these monsters took possession of a dry drain flanked by a stone dyke close to Glenforsa House. It had been attacked several times, but always contrived to glide into the wall. If the day was warm and sunny, there was the adder on the bank; but it became so wary, after having been occasionally pelted with stones, that on hearing the lightest step it slipped out of sight like magic. I desired my people, by taking a circuit, not to disturb it for a few days, and on a sultry morning crouched noiselessly to the spot. The creature was coiled up asleep, but the moment I raised my stick it darted for the wall. I struck just as its head entered the hole and stunned it. When carrying it home alive by the tail, it disgorged a full-grown field-mouse. On telling some neighbours what a capacious gorge this adder had, they capped him with another killed on the opposite coast of Morven the year before, of most prodigious length and girth, and in its belly was a full-grown rat! As I could not at first swallow the rat myself, I took the trouble to verify, as far as testimony could verify, the gluttonous feat of this python, and found that I had been correctly informed.

A still more incredible story of a Mull adder I give on my own authority. The reptile was basking close to a wall, when my son's tutor (now minister of Kirkliston) threw a large stone, and fairly halved it. The head and shoulders wriggled into the wall, and

he brought the tail to me. Three days after, he found the head half at the same spot hale and hearty, and when attacked, it hissed and bit his stick fiercely. This adder was severed about the centre, head and tail ends being of about equal length. So prolific in adders was Mull, that we have found them in winter coiled up in a heather-bush, no doubt surprised and frozen to death by one of those pinching night-frosts which often succeed the sunny butterfly-days of early winter.

The only serpent reptile I have detected in Bute is the familiar slow-worm. It is by no means plentiful here, although in Mull it is equally numerous with the adders. The rough ground of North Bute being well adapted to furnish food and shelter for reptiles, and the climate to foster them, why there are no adders and few blind-worms I do not pretend to guess.

The stoat abounds in Bute quite as much as in Mull, but the common weasel I have never seen but once.[1] A party of us surrounded and killed the creature on a January day, where it had taken refuge under a bush. It proved to be a beautiful example of the "cane" or "mouse-killer," considered a distinct species by many English gamekeepers. My own impression used to be that these mouse-killers are only the young of the common weasel, but I am now inclined to accord them the third class of our native

[1] Since writing the above I have twice detected full-grown specimens of the common weasel in Bute.

weasels. My tiny specimen is of course preserved as proof that there are at least *canes* in Bute! Never during the term of years I spent in Mull could I detect a single instance of the common weasel; and from inquiries I made in Skye, I am of opinion that they are extinct there also.

The larger-footed vermin, such as foxes, wild cats, martens, and (I think) foumarts, have most likely never been introduced into this island, or, if any of them were formerly indigenous, they have been extirpated. Hedgehogs, however, are far from rare, and my watcher trapped a brace of them last spring at the same egg set for hoodie-crows. The first escaped, minus a foot, which the man assured me had been the property of a rat of such gigantic dimensions, that no cat in Bute would be foolhardy enough to face him in single combat. As if to solve the mystery, and put a damper on his wonder and curiosity, next night the other hedgehog was taken. These prickly swine do great damage to all ground nests of eggs within their sluggish beat.

None of the grander birds of prey breed in Bute. The sea-eagle sometimes rests for a day or two when wandering south, or returning to her mountains again from a winter migration. I have, however, never seen a single instance of the peregrine falcon, the hen-harrier,[1] the golden eagle, or the buzzard, all of which

[1] Last autumn I perceived a female hen-harrier or ringtail skirting the shore of the Kyles, but it soon flew across to Argyllshire.

were far from uncommon in Mull. Until lately, ravens used annually to hatch on the precipices of North Bute; but for the last four years they have deserted their rocks. Still, on the evening of an autumn or winter shooting-day, I have been often warned by an iron croak from the clouds that the corbie was scenting the carrion, and, followed by her young ones, had swooped across the Kyles from the shaggy mountains of Cowal, to feast them in security on the island prey.

Of the *Accipitres*, the only species I have verified in Bute are the sparrow-hawk and kestrel. Once or twice I noticed in the distance what might have been a female merlin; but as there were no nests of that tiny falcon found on my heathery braes, the bird most likely was a male sparrow-hawk. Three of *their* nests were found by my watcher one spring, all fixed in stunted trees, the spontaneous growth of "dells without a name," in the midst of my best partridge breeding-ground. We trapped the old male and female of two of these nests, and actually caught the third pair; but the female escaped by accidentally dropping a thrush she was feeding the young with between the jaws of the trap, which prevented them from holding—while the trap that caught the male, unfortunately had a weak spring. After this warning, neither of course would return.

It is well understood by preservers of game that one hoodie-crow, or even a magpie, will destroy more grouse in the egg than a dozen eagles will do when

they are fully fledged. On Kames and North Bute there were certainly far fewer black, and especially grey crows, than are generally met with on the west coast islands. We only discovered four nests in the season of 1862, built as usual on the top boughs of tall trees, or on the stumps of bushes growing out of the face of a beetling cliff. We trapped or poisoned the old couples of all the nests but one, placed far down in an inaccessible precipice. Two of these pairs were royston and carrion crows breeding together. In both cases the females were black, and the males grey. They had built in fir and oak trees, but the two couple which had nestled in the cliffs overhanging the sea were all grey roystons.

The number of magpies was so prodigious in North Bute that I often wondered how any lowland winged game had been raised at all. With trap and poison we massacred eighteen couple of old birds, each pair having a nest full of eggs or young! Jesse, in his 'Gleanings,' mentions a knowing bird-dealer, who affirmed that there were two species of magpie. The smaller kind, which he termed "the bush magpie," always built in bushes or hedgerows, while the larger ones chose the tops of high slender trees. By far the greater proportion of those destroyed by me that spring had their nests in low scrubby bushes among the thick cover of North Bute. The Kames magpies, however, all built on the tops of high larches or firs. There was no perceptible difference in size of the old birds

of the two districts; and it appeared evident that the reason why those at Kames were so aspiring in the situation of their high-roofed nurseries, was the absence of cover to conceal them; and by far the greater proportion of these sly birds put more trust in their own well-known hiding powers among the thickets of North Bute, then in the pinnacle of the most tall and dizzy fortress that nature ever reared.

It is now upwards of forty years since the secret of trapping flying vermin, by removing their young from the nest and using them as decoys, was first found out by myself and my late father's gamekeeper. The day of our discovery rises clearly to my mind's eye from beyond the deepening mists of these long years; and somewhat gloomily too, for on that very day I was the means of expelling from the loch of my ancestors the most romantic and time-honoured dependant on its bounty.

I had arranged a vermin crusade with the keeper among the islands of Loch Lomond, and the ospreys, which had just repaired their yearly nest on the ivied castle of Galbraith, were unfortunately too tempting sport for a thoughtless youth and a destructive gamekeeper. My first exploit, after being concealed on the islet, was to shoot the female, while my ally, selecting the trustiest of his "stamps," fixed a sea-trout found in the eyrie on the plate, and set the trap. We then rowed to the adjacent twin islands, forming "the Straits" of Loch Lomond, where no less than four

couple of vindictive carrion-crows had each a nest of "hopefuls," within a few days of beginning their apprenticeship to the nefarious trade of the family. It was of no use to watch four nests for the chance of shooting the old crows, but a smart thought struck us —Why should we not use the young as *bait* in the circle of twigs? Immediately the four nests were emptied into twig-circles at the foot of their respective trees, and the traps set.

On our return the same evening, the poor osprey widower was fast in his trap, and next morning the female "hoodie" of all four nests was in the same predicament. The traps were reset, and the "he-ones" of two of the nests taken; but the other pair of males had been so scared at the plight of their struggling mates, as to allow the young to perish rather than venture to feed them. To obviate this, I have lately adopted the plan of setting two circles of twigs, *out of sight of each other*, and putting half the young in one circle and half in the other. Should an old bird be trapped, I change the young to a fresh circle of boughs a little way off. The surviving old bird will readily come to the fresh-set circle, although nothing would induce it to risk itself where it saw its helpmate so mysteriously in grief.

The familiar kestrel is equally well distributed in Bute as on the mainland. Distinct in manners and habits from both the falcons and the hawks, this bird is no less perfectly endowed for the part assigned to it

by Nature's law. Anchored in the air by that power of wing peculiar to this *day owl*, it plies the trade of mouse-hunting alike on the heathery hill or on the cultivated field. Mice being most rife in the dusk, the kestrel is the latest hunter of the hawks, and is of course gifted with a larger eye to collect the last rays of failing light. Although they have no objection to birds, *when they can catch them*, and prowl *all day* to provide for their nestlings, I consider kestrels less hurtful to game than the ivy-owl, which flies entirely *by night;* and my opinion is borne out by the feeding hoards of both when they have young. It is a fact that kestrels have far less difficulty in providing their nestlings with a constant supply of field-mice than the brown owl has; and this is accounted for by the kestrel's power of wing, which enables her to keep the air with the same ease as those buoyant owls which live exclusively on mice. The last summer I fished Loch Baa, a pair of these birds were rearing their young close to "the Salmon Point." Every time I fished the point, the hawks flew round screaming, while I assured my oarsman (a poacher from Salen) that they did no harm to game, and much good to the farmer. The man could scarcely conceal a sneer, until one afternoon the screamer dashed out of the wood, within a few yards of our heads, with a large field-mouse dangling in its claws. "I see'd its tail an' legs as plain as the boat," he repeated, again and again.

I knew of four kestrels' nests on my Bute shootings in 1861, most picturesquely placed on lonely points of rock, but did not permit any of them to be molested, with the exception of a young one, which my boys reared along with a sparrow-hawk of the same age. They never quarrelled, got into fine feather about the end of July, and seemed quite contented in their enormous cage. The kestrel once escaped, and flew about the old trees and tower in a restless unhappy manner, and seemed delighted when it found the way back to captivity—not unlike those inhabitants of the city suburb, who have learned to prefer their close den to the wildest freedom.

I am sorry to bring a charge of poaching against the respectable and industrious rook; but in dry seasons, when the parched ground refuses the usual supply of slugs and worms, these birds are very destructive among the eggs of the pheasant or partridge preserve. The charge of devouring young birds has never, as far as my research goes, been brought home to rooks, although members of the same order, but partners in a smaller firm, have been convicted of kidnapping and murdering pheasants a few days old. Two pairs of jackdaws, after a long drought, were shot in the act of picking up pheasants from the coops as soon as they were hatched, to satisfy the craving of their voracious nestlings. I am convinced, however, that these evil deeds are exceptional, and that almost any bird, as well as omnivorous crows, when deprived of its

favourite food, can subsist and even thrive on what it likes far less, and would indeed otherwise reject.

An appropriate rookery surrounds Kames Castle, and to watch the order and discretion of the sable colony when superintending the education of their respective families was a favourite pastime of mine. From the time they emerge from the wicker nursery, and are promoted to the schoolroom as "branchers," the system of rook instruction begins. They are taught to use a convenient bough always above the nest, and the parents, in bringing food, approach the nest-tree where they can be first discerned from this look-out twig. At first, when fed, the perchers were apt to plump down into the nest; but soon becoming stronger, they hopped and fluttered from spray to spray, but always above the sheltering nest, and ready to drop into it at the warning caw of the old ones. The flapping wings and eager calls of the young often warned me that the parents were approaching long before I saw them myself; and I was often amazed at the *intuition* of the different young broods in detecting the approach of their own father or mother among the black multitude hovering and cawing in the air. The branchers were not encouraged to take an adventurous flight to the adjacent tree until quite strong and fully fledged; after this they soon learned to follow the flock to the adjoining feeding-grounds.

From their cheerful social habits inviting observa-

tion and study, rooks and the interior economy of their commonwealth have furnished matter for many curious tales. I give the following instance, which took place recently: There had been for years a rook's nest on a tree in the back garden of a house in Moray Place, Edinburgh. During the winter of 1863 a large company of rooks pulled it quite down. The following spring a pair rebuilt the nest, laid eggs, and began to sit. An immense troop of their black kindred soon surrounded them, killed the male, who fell into the area, slew the female on her eggs, tore off one of her wings, and all the pirates disappeared as suddenly as they came, and never revisited the place —except, indeed, one solitary spy, which flew round and round the house the morning after the massacre, making a great noise. The butler picked up the slain rook and the female's wing, while the family watched with wonder the storming of the nest and the double murder.

A gentleman living in Newbattle Terrace, at the south side of Edinburgh, told me a curious rook anecdote. Being unwilling to allow a colony from a neighbouring rook settlement to take possession of the old trees around his house, he shot the female of the first couple that built a nest on them. The widower paired again directly, and brought the new mate to the same house, when she shared the fate of the first. The determined settler immediately took to himself a third partner, and installed her into the

fatal lodging. After her death the rooks assembled in a body, and tore down the nest. My authority for these facts is unimpeachable, and at the service of any one who thinks it worth while to demand it.

It may be from their uniform black inviting attention, but no birds show the Albino stain more frequently than blackbirds or rooks. I have seen these opposite "extremes" of colour "meet" in the rook almost every season. I shot a young one in the rookery at Kames with a white bill, another with white nails to its toes; a third had white wings, the most common phase of this *lusus naturæ*. The contradiction of a whole nest of white blackbirds, and another of white rooks, in both cases the parents being black, was the most unaccountable freak that nature could possibly play.[1]

When the month of December is mild, rooks build, thrushes sing, black-cocks croon, wood-pigeons coo, martin-swallows sometimes appear, and even butter-

[1] A notice of a white sparrow in the 'Scotsman' gave rise to this reply:—

"KAMES CASTLE, *Oct.* 10, 1865.

"SIR,—The white sparrow of Leith Walk is not the *rara avis* the correspondents of the 'Scotsman' suppose.

"I have one in my collection at 1 Royal Terrace, shot by my son in the barrack square of Dundalk. In the same case is another with white wings, shot by myself at a farm-steading near Joppa. Another buff sparrow haunts the village of Port Bannatyne, close to this place. Another white-winged sparrow I see almost every day when going to shoot in the north end of the island. The Port Bannatyne bird I saw all last season as well as this.—I am, &c.

"JOHN COLQUHOUN."

flies have been known to show themselves. Editors of newspapers are often bored at Christmas with accounts of some one or other of these wonders, which so often occur every mild winter season.

Another interesting section of the omnivora, the starlings, are very numerous in Bute. They come in clouds every evening to roost on the old beeches and elms, close to and even among the rooks. Hidling in their nesting habits, they cannot be watched so easily as rooks; but by the common mode of fixing boxes to the higher branches of a tall tree, we induced two pairs to adopt a ready-made home. I liked better, however, to see them choose their own site among the thick ivy of the garden wall, where several pairs hatched every year. Of course my boys tamed one, which proved the most pleasant and amusing of pets. It was early taught to quit its cage in the kitchen and devour the flies, which were so dexterously snapped up that one's eye often could not follow the capture. The windows were never shut when "the stare" was hunting, and it often flew round the lawn for half a day, but always came back to its cage before dusk. Our starling, however, was not sentimental, and if he had been, had no right to the plaintive plea, "I can't get out."

One feels a kind of reverence for those birds whose life is spent in the silence and solemnity of night; and the music in which they vent their contemplations, though always in the minor key, is listened to

with more interest, and perhaps scarcely less pleasure, than that of sunshine and the day. The spectre-like ways and melancholy hootings of these night-lovers please well the fancy; while the oft-repeated plaint of the wood-owl, from ivied tree or mouldering tower, is answered, perhaps, by some inner second of our own. Even the wild screech of the white owl, as it flits stealthily and rapidly along, has a power over us peculiarly its own; and one is amazed that so true a poet as Cowper could class the call of these honoured sages as "even beneath the harsh tones of the jay, the pye, the daw." Surely he could never have listened to them under the canopy of heaven, but have only caught the sound from his own drawing-room, with all the curtains closed.

The country around this venerable castle seems especially adapted to rear both white and brown owls. A mixture of cultivated and waste land, interspersed with woody dells, old ruins, and hollow trees, ought to have attracted them from the mainland coast opposite, where they always breed; yet, though constantly watching, I have never seen or heard either of the more common species,[1] while the rarest (the short-eared owl) twice unexpectedly presented herself on Kames Hill when I was ranging for grouse.

About the beginning of August 1864, I was ex-

[1] Some time after the above was penned, a white or barn owl took possession of the garden-wall ivy—the only one I have seen in Bute.

amining the ground with a view to the 12th, and my dogs "poked up" this owl, when she flew a little distance and perched on the top of a bing of stones capping a heathery mound. My youngest son, a schoolboy, was my only companion, and of course wished me to go home for a gun while he watched the owl. Not having a specimen in my collection, I was much tempted, but finally decided that, as the bird would most likely haunt the place, we would always give the owl's cairn a trial when grouse-shooting near it. All the early part of last season I never passed the mound without a close look-out; but the searches became more careless each succeeding time, and at last were omitted altogether. On the morning of the 4th of September of the following year, thirteen months after we first saw this rare bird, I was after grouse with *the same companion*, close to "the hoolet's cairn," as he called it, when of her own accord she rose at some distance from us, and I shot her. It was but seldom that my youngest boy was with me on my shooting excursions; and, considering my many trials for *the* owl with one or other of his brothers, that he should have been the only one out the day she fell, might have furnished good material for a superstitious Highland legend.

The far more common long-eared owl I have never seen when hunting there, but once or twice I distinctly heard its scream close to the castle windows, and once my gillie lad brought me a half-grown one,

found in a dying state on the lawn. It seemed starved to death, being a perfect skeleton.

I have frequently listened for the drowsy "chur" of another favourite bird of the dusk, the fearless night-jar. That this migrant should prefer Mull to Bute, where night-moths are so plentiful, seems to me unreasonable. Not one fern owl have I seen or heard on the northern district of Bute, while in Mull the monotonous spinning-wheel note was raised each July evening close to both our shooting quarters; and I have preserved the finest male specimen I ever saw, which I shot one 12th of August, raised from the heather by my dogs.

The more obtrusive and noticeable day migrants, such as the cuckoo, the landrail, and the swallow tribe, seem to revel in our neighbourhood; while fly-catchers and white-throats delight the eye with their graceful movements among the laurel bushes. From entries in my journal, I find that, on the 5th of May, when we returned to our island home, "Cuckoos and landrails are in full cry, and chimney swallows are flying in considerable numbers. Neither the window martin nor swift has yet appeared. The gardener told me that he first saw a swallow and heard the cuckoo on the same day, the 30th of April." "Monday, 22d May.[1]—Window martins began to build in

[1] A daughter of the late Lord President Hope gave me the following curious and interesting particulars of a swallow's nest which she had often heard told by her eminent father: A pair had built their

the eaves of the old tower. Saw, on the 18th, the first and only pair of swifts I have noticed here this season. Heard yesterday morning, at twenty-five minutes past three A.M., two cuckoos, two landrails, a thrush, a sedge-warbler, and other birds, all singing and calling at the same moment. The landrail in the clover field, and the sedge-warbler among the laurels, never cease their love-call during the darkest night." "Friday, June 9th.—The pair of swifts attempting to take possession of the same martin's nest they stormed last year."

That season the bold attack of the swifts was finally repulsed by the determined resistance of the martins. From coming early the previous year, the black pirates had little difficulty in seizing the newly-made home of the industrious builders; but this time the martins fought with desperation in defence of their young as well as home, so the pair of swifts, after their defeat, took easy possession of an empty martin's nest at Kames Villa, where my neighbour told me they brought up a thriving family. I marked the incubation and daily feeding of the young swifts last year until they took wing; I then carefully watched them each day till they left us for the arid plains of Africa. My last entries were Monday the 1st of August, Tuesday the 2d, and Wednesday

nest in a corner of the Lord President's window. The fabric, however, always fell, until two older swallows *built it for them*, and then left them in possession.

the 31st, after which date I saw none in Bute till my note of them next May.

All birds feeding in the air live on winged insects, and all feeders on winged insects must be migrants. No better type of both visits this country than the bird last mentioned. It is the fleetest and strongest-winged of all British birds. For ten long hours of a July day, without resting, will this indefatigable creature dart through the air at an immense height, collecting the higher-flying insects with its flat-shaped beak, the gape of which, as in all the swallows, is admirably adapted for hoarding the treasure. I once counted about a dozen black flies in the gape of some newly-shot swifts. So exclusively is this large swallow a bird of the air, that it never alights except when scrambling into its nest, and if placed on flat ground, from the weakness of its feet and length of its wings, would be unable to rise. The feet, exactly like a small hand, are totally unfitted for walking, and only serve the purpose of clutching the eaves of a house when seeking the nesting-place. Feeding higher in the air than the other swallows, their insect-food fails soonest, so they come later and leave earlier than any of the other swallows. Three months is their usual time with us; while the other three species of swallow—viz., the chimney one and the window and bank martins—not only come earlier, but stay two months later. I saw a bank martin in the south of England on the

25th of November 1864; and on the 5th of December following, another pair hawking for insects among the house-tops of Henley-on-Thames. I never before remember seeing these birds so late in departure.

The range of the chimney swallow and the two martins comes much nearer the ground than that of the swift. They often alight, and, from the conformation of their feet and shorter wings, can easily rise again. The weaker wing is made up for by the stronger foot, which gives these swallows the power of resting on house-tops, rails, or even on the ground itself.

Full before my window a pair of fly-catchers used to keep continually darting from the rails of a wooden bridge after insects on the wing. These birds may be called the next in succession to swallows, for although they live much on the ground, they find the chief of their food in the air. They arrive in Bute a little later than the swallows, and depart shortly before them.

On the broad planks of the bridge grey and yellow wagtails find a constant supply. These graceful creatures, although occasionally catching a fly in the air, keep almost constantly on the ground, where their active feet and legs enable them to chase their prey with great activity. Emphatically a ground bird, the wagtail is not confined to winged insects, but feeds much on worms and the eggs of land and water flies. This subsistence does not cease

entirely in winter; hence it does not migrate, or only partially so, from colder to milder places in our own country.

The rich fields of Bute teem with skylarks. These general favourites feed in summer on the field insects and earth-worms, in winter almost entirely on the seeds of annual weeds scattered over the corn stubbles. Totally independent of trees, they are the free songsters of the air, and from fields without a hedge, or upland slopes without a bush, trill forth their melody so charming to our ear, while the figure of the little siren, twittering in a flood of light, is wholly lost to our ken.

The larks introduce the buntings, the first of the hard-billed birds. Some of them approach the larks in their habits, by living much in cultivated fields, and refusing to perch on trees. They all have bills formed for breaking the rinds of seeds. They also eat insects moderately. I have never seen the common bunting in Bute, nor the snow species in winter. I have an Albino of the former in my collection, shot by my son at Fort-George.

Immense flocks of finches congregate in Bute all winter, and are most useful to the farmer, consuming the seeds of troublesome weeds which otherwise would overrun the country. Where the land is poorer, the finches migrate southward in winter, returning again to the north, when they separate to breed.

Greenfinches, and, of course, chaffinches, build near the old Castle of Kames—the goldfinch and greyfinch among the whins of the neighbouring brakes. Although so hard-billed, all these finches eat caterpillars and other insects moderately. The truest seed-eater of the race is the goldfinch, its favourite food being thistle, chickweed, and dandelion seeds. The green and grey finches are very partial to flax and lint seeds; hence their name of green and grey "linties" or linnets.

In describing the birds around this ivied tower of Bute, any one with a turn for natural history will at once perceive that I have, link by link, connected the most perfect of the soft-billed migrants of the air (the swift) with the hardest-billed resident (the goldfinch) which collects food on the ground. Like all God's works, there are no gaps in ornithology —one species glides into another until they are dovetailed into one harmonious whole.

In crossing the Minch some years ago, a little dark bird was constantly flitting past our cutter with all the characteristics of a swallow—powerful wings, long tail, body thrown well forward, and tapering like a canoe. Seamen have a superstitious dread that this sea-swallow brings storms, and delights in them. But the truth is, that "stormy petrels" dislike the tempest as much as their neighbours, as it is only when the sea is tolerably quiet that they can collect the chief part of their food, which con-

sists of the oily substance on the top of the waters. When the waves rise, of course the surface of the sea is much increased, which disperses the oil, and gives far more trouble in collecting it; add to which, the birds are so light and buoyant, partly from their greasy food, that, like the thistle-down, they appear the sport of the hurricane. When feeding they use both wings and feet, and while the former are expanded the latter tip the water, so the little bird appears both flying and walking. It is on account of this kind of "walking on the water" they derive their name of Petrels or Little Peters.

It was a lovely June night when I crossed the Minch, and many a sea-swallow was skimming in two senses ocean's calm bosom. When they were preening off the collected oil, its effect made the bird so light that, like a gossamer, it seemed to touch the sea but not to press it.

In size, shape, rapidity of flight, as well as endurance on wing, sweeping even over the broad Atlantic, petrels bear a close resemblance to the common chimney-swallow. But if the joyous sunny swallow, always associated with verdure and beauty, has this ocean delegate equally suggestive of clouds and tempest, it has also a representative among the sombre birds of night. The night-jar, familiarly known as the "night-hawk," not only connects the owls with insect-feeders, but also forms the link between swallows and owls. Like the swallow tribe, it is a

migrant and insect-feeder, preying on the night-moths, beetles, and cockchafers, by following and capturing them in the air as swallows seize day insects. Indeed, the capricious evolutions of this twilight spectre bear close resemblance to the sportive wheels of the birds of summer sunshine. It has been called "the night-swallow," just as stormy petrels are commonly known to sailors as swallows of the ocean.

From hiding in the daytime in brakes of fern, the night-jar is also appropriately styled "the fern owl;" and indeed the silky feathers, noiseless flight, large eye, dusky colour, and nocturnal life of this bird, quite entitle it to a low niche among the owls; while the insect food, migratory habits, large gape, soft beak, and weak feet, prove it equally akin to the swallow family, which right I have just claimed for it. The night-swallow has the advantage over the day one in a hair-netting on each side of the bill—a very great assistance in night-hunting, but not needed and therefore not given to the bird of the sunlight.

To a heedless listener, the song or call of each individual of any particular species of bird may appear exactly alike, but there is often considerable variety. Song-bird fanciers know this well; but in their case it may be urged that domestication and care have altered and drawn out the voices of their favourites, just as judicious farmers improve their stock. But I take as illustrations the most obtrusive and monot-

onous of our day and night birds, and to a fine ear scarcely any two of them will be found in the same key. There are also prominent and exceptional points of difference in the call of a particular cuckoo, as well as in the hoot of an eccentric ivy owl.

A cuckoo that haunted our garden all one spring and summer, and was most useful in grubbing up the cabbage and gooseberry caterpillars, put an additional note into its pipe. When a neighbour cuckoo from the near hill, and another from the beeches on the lawn, struck up the rubrical coo-coo, they were always replied to by the innovator's coo-coo-coo. We made him a D.D., and the "Dr" had perhaps as much reason for the change in his ritual as if his degree had come from the Senatus of Edinburgh itself. When fishing St Mary's Loch with a friend, the cracked voice of one cuckoo contrasted oddly with half-a-dozen others scattered through the neighbouring woods. We were lashing opposite sides of the loch, and the first question asked on meeting was—"Did you hear the cracked cuckoo?"

Although living close to the old trees where the brown owls hoot every night, some people are so unobservant as never to have remarked that the "dismal bird" has two calls. The first is one prolonged note, followed a few seconds after by a juggling imitation. The owl then rests its voice a longer or shorter time according to its whim, without any approach to regularity in these intervals. But not to hear the second

trembling hoot of a brown owl immediately following the first clear note, is rare indeed; and I have only remarked this in the case of one or two innovating owls among the many I have listened to under the spring or autumnal moonshine.

There are no rock-doves in Bute, but great numbers of ring-doves (the common wood-pigeon) fully supply their place. All spring the groves are soothed with the love-note of this ornamental bird; and when we were searching for vermin in May, the constant crash of the wood-dove from her wicker saucer of two eggs, gave token of flocks that would congregate in autumn and never separate until "the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land."

When the fruits and berries of early harvest begin to ripen, numberless small companies of wood-pigeons shelter in the shaggy copses of the Kyles, which soon unite into large assemblies under the spreading branches of the old beech-trees, to regale on their delicious nuts. So long as there is abundance of this beech-mast food our lawn beeches attract their myriads, which vie with the rooks and starlings in giving cheerfulness and animation even among the sere and yellow leaves of the shortening day.

The fine shoals of white fish that used to haunt the bays of Bute, have of late years considerably deserted them. In winter, multitudes of "herring hakes" are captured with the net—many of large

[redacted]

[illegible]. I have seen hundreds [illegible] on Port Bannatyne quay all through January. They are good food when cut into steaks and fried. One day a boy brought me a basket of five very bream-shaped fish with red fins, like the bream or 'braise' of Loch Lomond. They were more than a pound in weight, and he only asked a penny for each, and was quite pleased with sixpence for the lot. He called them "silver haddies," but I rather think "sea-perch" is the proper name. He caught them with a hand-line and a bit of herring for bait. During a whole season I fished Loch Long very successfully, both with herring and mussel bait, and with hand and long lines, but I never either caught or heard of this 'silver haddie' in that branch sea-loch of the Firth of Clyde.

When we were driving along the Kyles for a day's partridge-shooting on one of the northern farms of Bute, a whale of about thirty feet long rose close to the shore. On overtaking the gillie, whom we had sent forward with the evening relay of dogs, he assured us with a face of awe that the whale had become dangerous in the night and driven the fishermen ashore. Had it been one of the Arctic whales, not unfrequent in the Sound of Mull, the angry freak of the leviathan would have been characteristic enough; but as the present monster of the deep was only a bottle-nose, or "black-fish," it was evident that the boatmen had made the lad swallow a story "very like the fierce

fish," whose startling *entrée* had whetted his appetite for the terrible.

On questioning the fishers next day, they laughed heartily, saying it was true that a black-fish had broken a net some miles below, and that the one we saw had begun to blow and lash the water with its tail, but these vagaries were only signs of anxiety lest its young one, which no doubt was near, might get among the boats and nets. In place of dreading these small whales, the fishers were always glad of their company, as harbingers of a successful night's fishing; and about the same time last year I watched an old female bottle-nose and two young ones gamboling among the fleet of "scows," while the crews looked kindly at them as the jackals of their trade.

Prodigious droves of porpoises also hang upon the herring-shoals. The smaller kind, called "pelluchs," often spring several yards out of the water, and come down with a thump that may be heard in calm weather more than a mile off, while the white foam caused by their fall in the sea can be distinguished at double that distance. Frequently, in my walks or shooting excursions along the shores of the island, I have seen more than a hundred of these creatures rolling, splashing, or springing clear of the sea like fresh-run salmon.

A solitary grey seal for some years frequented the rocks above Ettrick Bay. The old hermit showed himself when the bag-nets proclaimed the annual

influx of salmon to the bay, and he cruised about the coast as long as the fish remained. One year "the grey sealch" was seldom out of the shallow water, and my watcher was always reminding me to bring my rifle-barrels—especially when the weather was warm and calm. Once, when shooting on Glenmore and Ettrick side, he would fain have changed my gun into a rifle, for the seal had been so bold that morning as to prevent his wife from filling her pitcher at the spring. "The beast," quoth she, pathetically, "put up its awfu' coorse head close to me an' the bairns—I was feared it wad come ashore an' tak' ane o' them awa'."

On several occasions I walked down to the bay armed and ready, but the enemy was either invisible, or was plying his piratical vocation among the salmon far beyond reach of my bullets. During 1865 he did not put in an appearance at all; and a few years before he also absented himself for a whole salmon season, but returned on the following one at the usual time. The many years that the Ettrick seal summered in its bay gained for it some local notoriety; while its curious and methodical habits so far interested me as to stop all desire to put an end to its interesting career.

Not being an entomologist, my observation of the insects of Bute has been very circumscribed. I have seen none of the southern butterflies or moths which the mild climate of this island had led me to expect.

Neither cockchafers nor stag-beetles enliven the twilight, and not one specimen of the larger sphinxes have we captured or even seen. Had there been any, no doubt some of these gorgeously-pencilled beauties would have found their way into our drawing-room, along with the sober-coloured small moths which beset our gas-lustres every warm, dark night, as both sides of our glass door into the garden were left open, when the gas was lit, and long after darkness set in.

In the summer of 1864, not only were wasps' nests more numerous than I ever saw them anywhere else, but their size was also enormous. There were at least a dozen close to the castle and garden. I have long had in my little museum what I considered as fine a specimen of the wasp's hive as it was possible to procure; but two of these from Bute (one built in a hedge adjoining the garden, the other fixed to a currant-bush in the very midst of the fruit) were nearly double the circumference of my preserved paragon. In 1865, although the fruit was fully as plentiful, and the season equally fine, there were scarcely any wasps' nests, and the few we discovered were wretched weedy productions, scarcely deserving the name.

As if in contrast to the wasps of 1865, the wild bees throve amazingly. My boys found no fewer than nine "binks" along the banks of the brooklet that feeds the duck-pond. These hives comprised

the yellow "foggy" bee, the small and large humble-bee, and one hive of red-hipped bees. In the evening we often removed the thatching, and inspected the grubs and honeycomb of the foggy bees' hives. Some were much more cross and dangerous when disturbed than their neighbours; and it is a rule acted on by schoolboys, that when wild bees hive under ground, and they fail to reach them at the first digging, it is useless to attempt a second, for the swarm will remove or destroy the honey on the first alarm from the spade.

It is a curious fact that honey-bees don't like the flowers or heather of Tighnabruaich. They therefore fly across the Kyles to Bute, and gather honey there. In returning laden, however, they are unable to re-cross the sea, and multitudes are found drowned. There is no honey to be had in Tighnabruaich in consequence. They thrive well in Bute, for, one summer, my boys took a hive in the old tower of Kames Castle full of splendid honey.

Had more southern night-insects found their way to the genial climate of Bute, they might probably have been followed by the great bat — *Vespertilio altivolans* of naturalists. This night-flyer takes the same place among bats that swifts do among swallows. Like that of swifts, their flight is rapid and high, and the term of their appearance equally short. I have watched them from Henley Bridge coursing over the Thames among the other bats, which looked,

in comparison, no bigger than butterflies. They shelter during the day in hollow trees, but never under the slates or leads of houses or out-buildings, the favourite refuge of the two other species of British bat. I have one of the Henley great bats stuffed, and, barring its colour (a rich chestnut), it is precisely like a giant of the smaller common kind.

The top of the old tower of Kames is a city of bats. On raising the lead sheeting about the beginning of summer, we discovered hundreds both of long-eared and little bats, each female having her piccaninny attached by its tiny claws to her breast. When hunting in the twilight, they carry their young one too; and the little creature is so deftly and firmly fastened as not in the least to incommode the parent, or hinder her success in moth-hunting. The mothers nurse their young ones in this way, which are the most horrid imps it is possible to fancy.

The grousing of this island would never suit many of the sportsmen-migrants who crowd our moors in August and September. The *battue* system from the south has been so successfully applied, even to Scotch moors, that in all our first-class ranges the difference between good and bad sportsmen or good and bad dogs is scarcely noticeable. If the man is a fair shot, little else will be required of him; while his dogs, if superior ones, are wasted on such ground, and may even have their mettle slacked, their hunting powers weakened, and their instinct dwarfed, from

finding multitudes of birds without working for them. To my mind, sixty or eighty brace killed on these swarming beats deserves to be placed in the same category as a pheasant-drive, or shooting rabbits in a teeming warren.

The moors which give most pleasure and satisfaction to a true and able sportsman are those which, with the aid of first-rate dogs, will afford a bag of from twenty to thirty-five brace. On such ground he can watch with delight the instinct which his high-couraged and keen-scented dogs throw into their work; his own knowledge of the sport and his walking powers will have full scope; and should his bag be up to the mark at the end of the day, he can feel satisfied that it was scientifically and pluckily filled.

In the above remarks I only allude to men who lay claim to be called the *élite* of the shooting world. A predecessor of mine, in a grouse tenancy, candidly told me that he gave up the moor, as he had to wander so long without a shot that he was likely to miss from nervousness. I also suspected that his kennel was none of the best, for during the term of his lease he never exceeded four brace of grouse in one day; while the first 12th I shot over the hill, with first-rate dogs, my bag was nineteen brace, and from ten to fifteen during August and the first weeks of September. This gentleman immediately took a moor in Perthshire, and the first day bagged fifty brace. I cordially wished him joy, and felt con-

vinced that a prolific moor was the place for a nervous shot with indifferent dogs.

Few will deny that the man who habitually brings home the heaviest game-bag has every claim to be called, if not the best shot, certainly the most accomplished sportsman of his party. To apply the test fairly, however, we must exclude those high-priced moors where good shooting *alone* is required, and stick to those second-rate beats where birds must be searched for with patient skill, and shot down with dexterity and *unfailing nerve*. The shooter who generally makes "the score" on such ground would only rarely find his shooting match with a fowling-piece all over the world.

The seasons 1864-65 (the two first of my lease of Kames and North Bute) were good breeding years, and the birds free of disease on most of the Scotch moors. By the 12th of the latter year they were very strong on wing, and, from unsettled broken weather, much wilder than usual. My team of sporting dogs was, however, most efficient, consisting of a brace of very superior Irish setters, an old English pointer bitch, admirable for close hunting, and a dropper (the cross of a celebrated Russian pointer dog with an excellent smooth bitch) which could work all day and never cry "enough." The whole four were hard workers, had exquisite noses, never got footsore, and were perfectly steady on all game. My retriever Auk completed the lot, and in my whole

sporting experience I have only had one to surpass him.

Bad weather at the 12th does not annoy me, as I have no objection to allow a week or ten days' "cheeper law." In the year just referred to, I did not shoot till the 22d, and had the comfort of never hearing a squeak all day. The morning was dull, and heavy mists lowered on the peaks of Arran and the Argyllshire mountains. In face of this the barometer steadily rose, and being seconded by a few breaks of the clouds, it was decided to send forward the mid-day relief of dogs, with orders to return should the weather fail.

Scarcely had we left the lodge gate when a depressing drop of rain fixed all eyes on the horizon. A fine bit of blue, large enough even for a Hollander's tarpaulins, decided the point in favour of the day; but the "spitty" rain did not cease for some time, and was sufficiently damping to turn homeward the gillie and his dogs. He joyously faced about again, assuring us he would be at the farmhouse where we meant to put up our car almost as soon as we should. It was now about nine, and the lad's directions were to meet us on the hill with the provision-basket and fresh dogs at two o'clock.

At a quarter to ten I uncoupled on the crest of Clochnabae. The heather was at first so wet as to preclude immediate hope of close shots; but the sun was blinking out, and would soon make it dry enough.

On circling round the hill, first one good pack, then another, each led by the jeering crow of the old cock, rose merrily in the very line of our range. At this moment a large red hare sprang up at my feet; and although unwilling to encumber my game-carrier with such lumber, I rolled her over in very spite. First blood of season 1865; but then it was only footed, not winged gore. Sun out now, and heath drying fast. Still another pack rose wild, and dogs beginning to look unhappy. Turned into the sunny side of the hill, where the raised packs had preceded me. Dogs ranging, free and true, but my first flying as well as running shot was fired without their aid. A fine pack rose at my feet, and I killed one, knocking feathers out of another with my second barrel—one of the few escapes of the day. First bird in the bag at half-past eleven.

The red Irishman now settled to a point, beautifully backed by the Saxon bitch. A fine chance, and slew my brace. The next pack, found by old Juno, rose sharp, but I got my couple of birds again. The canine, working with spirit and supporting each other well, made no mistakes; and although much of the game rose provokingly wild, they procured me some excellent chances, and we met the gillie and relay of dogs with nine brace of fine full-grown birds.

The Glenmore valley cuts right through the further hills of Bute. Hitherto I had kept to the north end, having parcelled out the southern division for the

evening sport. Before crossing to the fresh range, I gave the ridge and sheltered face of the hunted hill a mile with the fresh dogs for broken birds. If a beat for scattered game has been judiciously chosen, and the shooter humours it by a series of circles and *détours* with the aid of trustworthy dogs, the bag rapidly and pleasantly fills.

When a young and impatient grouse-shooter, I had a useful lesson on scattered birds, which has often since encouraged me to perseverance and helped me to success. On that day, many years ago, I had reserved my best dogs for the evening, and after some successful morning shooting on the hill-top, had broken and scattered some fine packs. Most of the birds had topped the ridge slanting downwards, and I felt certain of heavy shooting whenever I had sufficiently worked the higher peaks. The steep ground and warm sun had been severe, and when I began to hunt for the scattered game, my dogs showed signs of having done their work. Still they fought bravely on, but, with the exception of a solitary cock, we did not stumble on any of the birds we had driven down. Feeling sure that we had passed through the midst of them, I proposed to take a second stretch along the brow with the evening dogs, even in the face of my watcher's protest that we should lose two valuable hours seeking for game that "wasna there." Scarcely were the fresh dogs free than they found grouse.

Another and another point in quick succession, while the game, in threes, pairs, or single birds, rose at my feet. In place of two lost hours they were equal to any four of the rest of the day for regular and deadly chances. It was only the same over again in Bute, and my brow range of Clochnabae hill added three brace to the bag.

An old gamekeeper used to say at starting, "I'll try for so many brace, but dinna expec' aboon the half o't." I had set my bag at twenty brace, but did not "expec' aboon" fifteen. It was past four when we crossed the valley of Glenmore and scaled the evening hill, so to make eight brace on Bute moors in the few hours now at our service would tolerate few misses. Even of this short time more than an hour elasped before we got among the packs; but when we did, the dropper behaved splendidly. Finding at long distance, and never making a false point, she gave us every opportunity to break the game on the very heights we had selected. The scent had been good all day, and at length the birds began to sit pretty well too. They were found by the dogs in their best style, while I seconded them by shooting at the top of my bent; and at a quarter to eight, the gillie threw up his "Glengarry" with a hurrah for the twenty brace.

My next grousing day, on the 26th, was devoted to the nearer moors of Kames. A high east wind spoilt the scent, and made the game still more fretty

of partridges on both beats, and with the same number of shots, for I only missed a second-barrel bird each day.

Most of the Rotoodach partridges, when sprung, having found safety in the copsewood flanking the stubble and turnip fields, on my next excursion to that ground I endeavoured to intercept the birds from their refuge. We were fortunate in forcing some good coveys into the hill-ground, where I had fair shooting, and made a score of eight brace—my largest partridge bag of the season. In this low shooting the retriever backed up the gun by securing winged birds all but lost. Neither in wood, furze, turnip, nor potatoes did one wounded partridge foil this invaluable dog throughout the shooting.

But if the retriever did justice to the gun, the gun, in its turn, did justice to the shooter. I have never used a small fowling-piece that does more unfailing, deadly execution. It was made by Alexander Henry of Edinburgh, a short time before the "Henry rifles" acquired their fame. I was telling Henry of a duck-gun made by his former chief, Mr Ross (who then had a monopoly of the Edinburgh gun trade), which for regularity of pattern and hardness of shooting I had never seen surpassed. He answered by offering to make for me a light gun to try against it, which I was to return if not pleased. The stocking of this gun, after the model of the Ross one, fitted me so well, that

the first day I tried it in Mull I bagged ten and a half brace of grouse (every bird I shot at), leaving off without a miss, and the very first brace of bagged birds were a fair right-and-left chance.

Although a number had died that year of disease, hares continued plentiful enough both on Kames and North Bute. We could generally each day kill as many as were convenient to carry, and rabbits were again on the increase, after having been nearly exterminated by hired warreners a few years before. Alpine hares had been introduced from Argyllshire, but I never yet moved one, although my watcher saw a couple at different times, after they had donned the snow-white fur. I did not regret their scarcity, for on my previous shooting they had swarmed into a perfect nuisance. You could only shoot there in comfort by always giving them the cut direct when they rose, and most certainly by refusing to honour them with a gun salute. The pointers or setters soon learned to follow my example, and were as callous to the antics and vagaries of these hares as if they had been sheep. When the grouse began to fight shy of our advances, we were fain to scrape up acquaintance with the blue-coats—now putting on their wintry livery—and with the aid of terriers and retrievers could any day load a pony and his panniers with them.

It is the belief of some naturalist authorities that Alpine and Irish hares are of the same species, and

that any apparent difference is caused by variation of climate. They maintain that, on the colder mountains of Scotland, the Irish hare would grow white in winter, while the Scotch white hare would retain the summer blue on the Irish plains during the severest December and January snows. From close observation of both, I entirely dissent from this theory. The Irish hare is thinner in the fur, which has a dash of red very different from the summer mouse-blue of the Scotch hare; the body is more lightly made for the limbs; and having hunted them a whole season on the plains of Boyle, I can vouch for it that no Alpine hare would live before *foxhounds* half the time these Irish ones constantly do.

I have in my collection Alpine hares in summer and winter dress, together with an Irish one, and the difference is apparent to the most careless observer. I may also ask, why should not the mild air of Bute have prevented the two snowy specimens my watcher discovered from assuming their unsullied attire? White, in his 'Selborne,' records his satisfaction at the addition of the Alpine hare to the scanty animal catalogue of the British fauna, and would no doubt have protested against such summary swamping of it in the lineage of the Emerald Isle.

The same theory is broached with regard to our truly national red grouse and the willow grouse of Norway. Now, although there are strong points of

resemblance both in the flight and summer plumage of the Norse bird to ours, there is this (to me) insuperable objection—viz., that no red grouse can exist without heather; and it also tells against the curtailers of species that the Scotch mountains should be cold enough to whiten [Irish (?)] hares and ptarmigan, and yet be too mild to perform the same office for willow grouse.

That hill partridges are distinct from lowland ones, which many sportsmen-naturalists assert, cannot be so strongly supported; but I have always thought that the wilder feeding-ground of the moor-edge bird has only dwarfed the old English partridge, and somewhat darkened its feathers.

Mire-snipes are pretty generally distributed over the moorlands and waste ground of Bute, and a good sprinkling of jacks are constant to certain reedy plashes all through the winter. When killed off, their vacancies are generally not long in being supplied.[1] The boast of the island, however, is the

[1] An old Argyllshire sportsman assured me lately that no retriever would carry a jack-snipe on account of its nauseous taste, of which the dog had the full benefit from being able to close its lips on the unsavoury morsel. Never having perceived this disgust to "jacks" in my retriever, I gave him a fair trial the first opportunity which occurred on my next shooting-day. I dropped the jack a good way off, loaded, and then desired the dog to fetch it. He carefully brought and laid it down at my feet, with every appearance of satisfaction and comfort. This is no doubt one of those retailed blunders which may pass muster long enough from not being challenged and proved false.

woodcock. The season of 1864-65 was reckoned the worst woodcock year which the natives remember, while the preceding one was the best. Several of the shepherds assured me that, in the winter of 1864-65, there was not one for ten of the previous season; and yet, in comparison with much of the cover-shooting I have rented, the woodcock sport of 1864-65 in Bute was really superior. With the exception of one distant snap, and taking all chances as they came, I had the good hap to bag the first fourteen woodcocks I fired at last winter. When hard frost set in, the average bag was from three to five couple, besides a fair score of other game. In a really good woodcock year, I have little doubt ten or twelve couple might easily be bagged on one day by a superior shot.

The variety of the early winter shooting of the Kyles keeps excitement alive, and adds zest to the sport. My diary of the 21st of November 1865 notes that my son and I killed grouse, blackcock, woodcock, wild duck, moor-hen, rabbit, and roe-deer. On the following Wednesday, the 23d, grouse, black-game, partridge, woodcock, snipe, hare, and rabbit.

Flying overhead, or pitched among the marshes, large flocks of golden plover and curlews sometimes give occasion for "a family shot." The former keep much among the higher hill-tops, while the curlews chiefly affect the waste ground close to the sea. Both breed freely on the Bute moors; and one summer,

when a pair of curlews were screaming and dodging our path, my retriever made a sudden stop at my heel. On giving him leave, he coolly walked a little way and laid hold of what (from the commotion it made) I fancied a leveret. The prisoner, a young curlew, was delivered up to me unhurt, and was nearly the size of its equally noisy parents.

A moor-lochan, imbedded among the very peaks of the North Bute hills, is the chosen resort of the moss-ducks. The loch is about half a mile in circumference, and its situation so retired as to attract, in addition to the ducks, about a score of herons. On account of the bare flat banks, stalking is impossible; but even were it otherwise, the herons seem to have constituted themselves the sentries of the loch, and, taking post all round it, their telescope necks effectually stop all stealthy intrusion. One day, when grouse-shooting round this loch, I noticed that the sentinels were absent. Coupling my setters, and giving them in charge of a gillie, I managed, by great care and waste of time, to fire a random shot into the thick of the flock when they flew. The chance was much too distant to injure their bodies, but a duck and drake dropped wing-broken into the water. Both made several dives, and finally disappeared at opposite sides of the loch. Confident in the painstaking caution of Auk, I desired him to search the bank, expecting a shot when the ducks rushed from their hid-

ing into the water; but at the first round this experienced retriever found and secured both, without giving either the chance of making a dash from their concealment, which the slightest bungle on his part would have enabled them to do.

Not long after I had my revenge on one of the self-elected guardians of the ducks. Placing one of my sons a little below the outlet, where the flight, when disturbed, are apt to leave the fresh water for the sea, I showed myself on the top of a steep height on the opposite side. As soon as I appeared, the ducks knit together and took wing, but flew past the ambuscade quite out of reach. Like all very young sportsmen, the boy fired a warning to the ducks to take it high when again expelled from their city of waters. Now it happened that the herons were ranged like soldiers along the loch at the foot of the peak where I had attempted my strategy. Directly on hearing the report they climbed the air, and I had just time to cock one barrel and shoot a front-ranker; but had both barrels been on full bend, I could as easily have dropped his rear file with a second shot. The bird happened to be a fine male, and, *for a heron*, plump enough to prove that the Bull Loch fishmarket was well stocked.

Another company of herons haunted the opposite extremity of my shooting-beat during two seasons. Contrary to their usual habits and na-

ture, these last frequented the bare hard moor, and appeared quite independent of loch, stream, or even morass. Like their neighbours, they always posted "a look-out," but were much tamer than herons usually are. To any fair and open passer-by they gave little heed; but the least appearance of scouting instantly raised their neck or put them to flight. I suppose they fed at night, and only rested on the moor. Since the railways began, several heronries in the neighbourhood of the lines have been deserted, and the refugees have settled on the trees of more secluded districts. The old heronry at Gartshore was abandoned at the very time when the trees in the gorge of the lonely Glen Fruin were appropriated by a colony of these birds.

With the exception of the never-failing mergansers fishing the shallow water of the coast, and a few waders on the shore, the seas around Bute seem to have no attraction for wild-fowl. This neglect of the many sheltered bays and shallows of the island seems strange, but of all birds it may most emphatically be said of sea-fowl, "There is no accounting for taste."

Roes and partridges are far more numerous in South Bute than on the northern division of the island which I rented. The copses of the Kyles, which so often helped the partridges to foil us, always, however, harbour a sprinkling of these beautiful little deer. Not wishing to disturb them much last winter,

we had only one hunt, when I killed a very fine buck with a splendid head, and my son a large doe, both in prime order. In 1865, when beating for black-game, we stumbled on a pair of roes which had acquired such confidence in this forbearance as scarcely to heed the report of our guns.

The rod-fishing of Bute is confined to a few moor-lochs of moderate calibre; there are no fishing-streams deserving the name.

APPENDIX.

TRAPPING THE TRUE AND LEGITIMATE WAY TO DESTROY VERMIN.

I HAVE put together the following directions for the trapping of vermin, in order that gentlemen may judge of the merits of their keepers in this respect; being well aware how few have anything like a perfect knowledge of this most necessary part of their business. If the traps are not set with much skill, and the places for planting them for the different kinds of vermin selected with great judgment, more harm than good is done, as few are caught, and the rest put on their guard, and thus rendered more cunning and difficult to be trapped afterwards.

A gentleman should first ascertain if his keeper can perform the mere manual act of setting a trap. This must be done by cutting a shape for it with a mole-spade in the turf, thinly sprinkling the plate with earth, and then giving a top-covering precisely the same as the ground: when set, it should be neither higher nor lower. After having satisfied himself of the neatness of the setting, the gentleman may spring the trap, and if it closes clear of grass or leaves, he may rest satisfied that his keeper knows the A B C of vermin-killing. If, on the contrary, a quantity of the top-dressing is caught between the jaws of the trap, the keeper

is not fit to set for vermin, and must be made thoroughly master of this first requisite before he attempts to do so.

I shall now mention the different kinds of four-footed and then winged vermin, giving minute instructions how each may be most readily trapped. Foxes are the most cunning, and consequently most difficult to be taken. The best time to set for them is from the beginning of January —when the males follow the females—till March. Their haunts may then often be discovered by their wild peculiar bark. Any clear open space near them, with a hollow in the middle, is the place to plant traps. The hollow is necessary, as the fox always likes to be out of sight when he is eating. The bait is a piece of hare, rabbit, or the entrails of any animal, covered over slightly with earth; and half-a-dozen traps are set round with the utmost care. Fewer will not do, as the fox might escape between. The bait is covered over in order to make Reynard suppose that another fox or dog may have buried it there. Some drag it along the ground for a considerable distance on either side, after first rubbing it on the soles of their shoes, and letting fall little pieces of cheese at intervals: this can do no harm, but I think as little good.

The circle of twigs is also a very good way of trapping foxes all the year. It should be made larger than for martens or cats, in order to contain more bait—this should be added to without being removed when it taints, *as the greater the scent the better the chance.* Traps set for foxes should never be made fast, or they are apt to gnaw the leg off: the best plan is to tie two or three together; for if the fox can drag them, however great the difficulty, he will not attempt the desperate remedy of *amputating his leg.* When they have litters, the old ones may be taken; but it requires great judgment to select the spot they would be most likely to walk over in going to and from their young: a first-rate trapper, however, will generally secure one or both. It is the more difficult, as the traps must be set at some distance, or the young ones would be apt to stumble into them. As only single traps are set, they

should be tied to a stone just large enough for the fox to drag with some trouble. The keeper should always sprinkle a little water over the top covering of the trap to take off the scent of his fingers.

I once saw in the newspapers a plan for extirpating foxes in the Highlands. Each hill-farmer was to keep a couple of fox-hounds, a good greyhound, besides terriers. When occasion offered, they were to join packs, and collect the best shots (*alias*, the greatest poachers) in the neighbourhood. I can only say, without in the least impugning the motives or honesty of intention of the projector, that if the Highland proprietors suffer a gang of this kind to take the hill at pleasure, they will soon hardly have a head of game on their estates. As to allowing farmers to keep greyhounds, terriers, &c., no gentleman who sets any value on his grouse or hares would ever think of it.

The otter, although harmless on the moor, is sufficiently mischievous in the loch to deserve honourable mention here. On the banks of the lochs and rivers which he frequents, he has always a fane to which he resorts once a-day: this is either a stone or root of a tree; but if neither of these is at hand, he scrapes up the sand or gravel into a small mound. It is easy to know his marks, as his dung is full of fish-bones. Traps should be set all round, a twenty-feet cord tied to each, with a cork or piece of wood attached; the traps never to be fastened, otherwise the otter may pull out his leg, from its being so oily, thick, and short. The moment he is caught, he waddles with the trap to the water, which sinks and drowns him, the line and float showing where. It is also an excellent plan to look for the place where he lands, and plant a trap just under water. As soon as he strikes for ground, he is caught by the fore-feet. This trap needs no covering but the water, and is never suspected.

Cats, martens, and foumarts are easily trapped. Plant a circle of twigs about three yards round, the twigs a foot and a half long and close to each other, placing the same bait as for a fox in the centre, but without any covering;

leave two openings at opposite sides just large enough for the trap. You may also set with baits hanging on the stem of a tree—a few twigs placed on either side to prevent the vermin sneaking in there, and so carrying off the bait. Box-traps are very good for stoats or weasels; but as they are generally set in the low grounds, where polecats also abound, I prefer an iron rat-trap with a strong spring, having found that the foumarts constantly pushed up the lid of the other, and so escaped. The rat-trap will hold a polecat, and do little or no injury to cattle or dogs. The bait should be hung upon a twig immediately above, and almost out of reach of, the weasels.

Stoats, and especially weasels, are often seen in great abundance in summer. They may then be very easily shot, as you have only to imitate the squeak of a mouse to bring them close to you. I once, when without a gun, decoyed one so far away from its retreat that I killed it with my stick. Should the keeper see a weasel, all he has to do is, with as much speed as possible, to cut a small piece from any of his baits, drag it along the ground where he last saw the weasel, and hang it on a twig with his rat-trap under, as before described: if he does not let too long time elapse, it is sure to be taken. The weasel, like the merlin, is the maximum of strength, courage, and activity, in the minimum of size. The depredations of this little creature would not be so formidable, if he contented himself with satisfying hunger. But, on the contrary, whenever he has the opportunity, he murders by wholesale like the marten, rejecting everything but the most dainty morsels. A stoat in pursuit of a rabbit or young hare, is the very miniature of a wolf running down a deer. A panic comes over the victim, which prevents it from making a determined effort to escape. Instead of distancing its persecutor by taking a long stretch, the poor terror-stricken rabbit keeps slowly dotting along, only a short way ahead, and squats down the first opportunity. The stoat follows on the track, and very soon the rabbit, not daring to take refuge in its hole, resigns itself to its fate. A short time ago I killed a fine male in the

act. He chased a rabbit through my roe-pass, when I stopped his hunt with my buckshot.

I kept a weasel for some time in a wire cage, which soon became tame enough to pull little pieces of meat from the hand through the bars. Having a mind to try its pluck, I procured from a rat-catcher an enormous male rat, at least twice the size of the weasel, and in presence of several friends turned it into the cage. The rat reared itself on its hind-legs and fought with the utmost desperation, but in less than a quarter of a minute it lay gasping on its side. There is a curious account of a similar fight between a large buck-ferret and a rat, in Jesse's 'Gleanings of Natural History;' but I cannot help thinking, either that the rat must have been the champion of the genus *Mus*, or the ferret the most faint-hearted of his species. Once let a ferret, properly entered at rats, get within gripe of its foe, and it will seize *by scent* with the rapidity of lightning, and never quit its hold while life remains. The pheasantry-keeper, whom I before mentioned as having taught grouse, black-game, pheasants, &c., to live together in harmony, tried a similar experiment with a ferret, a polecat, a stoat, and a weasel. They were confined in a large box grated over with iron bars; and the result proved that a ferret stands upon little ceremony with a much more fierce and active enemy than a rat. The first victim was the stoat, whose place was supplied by another, which soon shared the fate of its predecessor. The ferret next attacked and killed the weasel; and, to crown all, the polecat (a large male), nearly double the size of the ferret (a small female), was found dead one morning—the cage exhibiting the marks of a desperate struggle: the foumart certainly fought at disadvantage, one of its fore-legs having been injured by a trap. These creatures had lived together for upwards of a month, after which time the ferret commenced its attacks at intervals of a few days or a week. I went out daily to see them fed, when the dinner-party exhibited very little kindliness or good-breeding.

No traps should be set for running vermin during warm

weather, as the bait so soon taints; nor in hard frost, as the traps are then apt not to spring, or hold the vermin so slightly that they escape.

WINGED VERMIN.

The hawk tribe, seldom or never taking a bait, are the most difficult to be trapped of all winged vermin. The only plan with any chance of success (except at the breeding-time) is to place a trap on the top of a wall, or bare stump of a tree, throwing a dead cat or other carrion at the foot: the hawks will often alight, to look down at it, and thus be caught. A hawk, however, will always return to any bird he has killed, even should scarcely anything be left but the bones. In such a case, immediately procure a trap, hang the bird directly above, and *close* to it, or the hawk may reach over and take it down without touching the trap.

But when they hatch is the time thoroughly to thin them. The nests should be most carefully searched out, and not disturbed until the young are more than half fledged. Many shoot the old hen flying off her eggs; but this is not the way to extirpate the race, as the males of course escape. When the young are pretty strong, and able to call loudly from hunger, take them out of the nest, and make two circles *out of sight of each other*. These circles must not be artificial or formed of twigs stuck in the ground, but any bushes of furze, heather, or rushes, must be taken advantage of for the purpose. Half of the young ones must be tied in the one, and half in the other. They must have very short tethers, or they will waddle into the trap. If this is well executed, you are sure of both old ones next day.

Buzzards[1] and kites are easily trapped in autumn or

[1] A curious story of the honey-buzzard was related to me by a gentleman whose name stands high as a scholar, and who takes great interest in natural history. A friend of his was passing a gravel-pit, when he perceived what he thought was a bird without a head; he walked silently forward and seized it, and discovered that his prize was a honey-buzzard,

winter, as they readily take a bait. They do little mischief to game, unless a young bird that cannot fly, or small leveret, happen to stumble in their way. I am loath to bring an accusation against my great favourite, the ivy-owl, but truth compels me to say that he is nearly as injurious to game as the buzzard—quite as much so as the kite. The other owls—viz., the white and the long and short eared—may be considered harmless.

Carrion-crows and ravens, or "corbies," take them for all in all, are much more mischievous than hawks. The best season for trapping them is in March and April. The circle of twigs is to be set in conspicuous places; the same bait as for foxes, martens, &c., will do, but the best is a dead lamb, from being so readily seen; and at that season it may be very easily procured. The numbers taken in this way are astonishing. When they become cunning, take down the twigs and plant half-a-dozen traps round the lamb. If there is a puddle of water near, the bait may be placed in the middle of it, with one or two entrances, upon which traps may be set; the ravens, &c., are sure to light on these entrances before settling on the lamb, and the trouble of setting so many traps as would otherwise be required is thus avoided.

Magpies, jays, &c., all take a bait, and no better bait for them than a nest of small birds' eggs; but the grand recipe to destroy them thoroughly is to find the nests and set the young in circles.

There are many other ways of killing all these vermin which I have not thought it worth while to mention, as they cannot stand a comparison with those I have named. Traps must always be set close to paths or any other open places near the haunts of the different vermin, with which it should be the keeper's great endeavour to make himself thoroughly acquainted. If placed according to these rules, there is not much danger of either cattle or game getting into any, except those set *without circles* for carrion-crows

which had thrust its head into a wasp's nest, and was busily engaged in devouring the larvæ. The bird was kept tame for some time afterwards.

or foxes, which of course require caution. We constantly see keepers lounging about with their guns in pursuit of vermin; this ought not to be. Guns only tempt them to idleness, and are an excellent excuse for doing nothing. In my opinion, no vermin should be shot by a gamekeeper. But if his master prefer securing the old hens as they fly off the nest during incubation, instead of waiting for the young to come out, no other plan can be adopted. My reasons to the contrary have been given.

I have no doubt that the truly valuable keeper, who takes an interest in the duties of his situation, will approve of all I have said, and endeavour to profit by it: the careless, ignorant, and lazy will as certainly cavil and condemn.

TRAPS.

Great care should be taken in the selection of traps: none but an approved maker ought to be employed: *that the springs are well tempered and strong is of the utmost consequence.* The jaws must *overlap*, which is a great preventive to the legs, especially of the winged vermin, being shred off. To avoid this, some traps are made with weaker springs and long teeth: these are not to be recommended; for, although the teeth may counterbalance the weakness of the spring, yet the vermin are apt to feel them when walking up to the bait, and slink back without stepping on the plate. It is also much more difficult to set them neatly. Traps whose springs have been weakened by constant use may be reserved for flying vermin.

VERMIN TERRIER.

I had almost forgotten to say that every gamekeeper, in all his trapping and other excursions, should be accompanied by an excellent vermin terrier. The use of this dog is to challenge vermin in earths, clefts of rocks, &c., thus making

the keeper aware where to plant a trap; to find out foumarts in old walls or heaps of stones, where they generally conceal themselves; and to run those banes of the preserve, the *semi*-wild cats, into trees, where, with the assistance of his master, thay may easily be killed. A dog will soon become so expert at this last accomplishment that few cats will be able to escape him. These cats do much more mischief than real wild ones, as they are impudent enough to carry their depredations into the midst of the preserve, and close to the most frequented places. The foumart, although an enemy to all game, is generally more calumniated than he deserves: he is not nearly so injurious as the marten or cat. I have frequently found his retreat, when no other signs of plunder were to be seen except a few frogs half eaten. When discovered, the polecat has no activity; and if the wall or heap of stones where he has sheltered himself can be pulled down or removed, he cannot escape.

Only *one and the same terrier* should be the keeper's constant companion, as the dog will soon be "up to" the traps, and from continual practice become first-rate at this work. He must have a very good nose, and be perfectly callous to game of all descriptions, but especially rabbits and hares.

POISONING VERMIN.

Clearing off the vermin by poison has been much in vogue of late years. But, to say nothing of murdering all the dogs in the neighbourhood, it seems a pity to treat the *now* rare and interesting rovers of the desert like rats. This Turko-Spanish plan of quietly putting them out of the way may find favour with the man whose only pleasure in Highland sport consists in butchering game. For my own part, I would rather trap one fine specimen of the hill-fox, the wild-cat, or the marten, than shoot one hundred brace of grouse. As to the mean pilfering Lowland kinds, such as carrion-crows and magpies, there is no danger of scarcity

in that quarter, and no risk in poisoning them, provided it is done by means of eggs. The keeper has only to gum with a piece of white paper the chip in the shell where the strychnine is inserted, and put two or three of these poisoned eggs, a little shaded by the long grass, under the trees where the magpies, &c., harbour. They will be almost certain to see and devour them.

GROUSE DISEASE.

THE following communications to 'The Field' were penned at irregular and sometimes long intervals, the author having all along been convinced that over-preservation was the cause of grouse disease. Time (he thinks) has quite confirmed his first impression—especially as the most experienced sportsmen of his acquaintance cordially agree with him.

GROUSE DISEASE.

SIR,—Since my communication in your last number, showing, from my former writings, that I always believed the multiplication of grouse to be the primary cause of the disease, I find the following paragraph at page 133 of my last work, 'Salmon-Casts and Stray Shots,'[1] published in 1858: "As to the grouse disease, when they are got up to the extent they were a few years since, an epidemic will be likely enough to thin them down, and may linger for years after. This, in a small way, often happens to hares, when they increase beyond a certain limit."

JOHN COLQUHOUN.

1 ROYAL TERRACE, EDINBURGH, *Dec.* 6, 1862.

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[1] Now incorporated in the present work.

GROUSE DISEASE AND ITS PALLIATIVE.

SIR,—Not a year has passed of the last twenty that I have not done my best to convince the rising generation of sportsmen of the truth advocated by Mr Colquhoun, and (as "Peregrine" assures us) by Captain Stewart—namely, that the grouse disease in its epidemic form is fully accounted for by the systematic destruction of the falcons, hen-harriers, and marsh-harriers, which formerly made almost every unhealthy bird their prey (the former as it flew, the two latter as they squatted), and so prevented the infection from spreading. R. CARR.

GROUSE AND SHEEP.

SIR,—I would fain, through the medium of your influential columns, try to prevent in the bud a feeling of antagonism which seems on the increase between the renters of Highland grouse-shootings and the renters of Highland sheep-grazing.

If this gathers ground, it will do more to damage the grouse than any other cause; and I am fully convinced, if it ever comes to a question of "wool *versus* feathers," that the latter will go to the winds. I know it for fact that there is a soreness on the part of Highland stock-farmers about the manner in which sheep-grazing, or, as they call it, *overstocking the ground*, had been denounced from time to time by zealous, or perhaps over-zealous, advocates of the red grouse. In more ways than one the poor grouse have much need to be saved from their friends, some of whom are woolly-headed enough to insist that their four-footed rivals should be limited—a hostile move on the part of the backers of the bird which those of the quadruped would soon find means of returning with interest.

I have generally found, Mr Editor, that advocates of these extreme measures are sportsmen who only come down in August for a month or two's shooting, or, what is little

better, have only had experience in *one locality;* while to understand the question thoroughly, you must not only watch the grouse and sheep ground from spring till the end of the grouse season, but also observe carefully various parts of Scotland, as there are many shades of difference in the north, south, and west, as relates both to sheep-farming and grouse; and until you are master of these details, I maintain you are incapable of forming an opinion upon Highland shootings in connection with Highland farmers and Highland farming. Immediately before the grouse disease, the head of game was got up to such an extent as to be almost a nuisance: it could only be compared to the best pheasant-coverts or partridge-preserves of the south. There was no possibility of showing off either a good sportsman or a good dog upon a really *good moor.* It was simply load and fire—load and fire; the knowing grouse-shooter with his brace of crack pointers and setters having little advantage over the mere novice (if he shot well) and his useless dogs. As might be expected, a disease thinned the birds down to more natural numbers, and here follows the great blunder.

In place of giving "a jubilee," proprietors let their moors at the same high figures, and tenants were eager enough *at first* to take them. They were, of course, annoyed at the dearth of sport, and many took revenge on the few grouse that remained—hence overshooting, *after the disease,* was the main cause of the continued grouse scarcity. When the disease abated, it was difficult to persuade especially English renters of shootings of this fact. They looked eagerly about for other causes, and soon fastened on the black, but especially white faced, sheep, as scape-goats for their own guns.

They argued that the "pale-faces" would drive out the red aborigines of the Scottish mountains as they had already done on the Indian prairies. Nay, I have heard some enthusiasts go so far as to affirm that farmers had a panacea for turning heather into grass, so making the Highland moors rival the South downs! Alas for wild sports and the red grouse!

If a man of money determines to pay both the grouse and sheep rent, he may set every one at defiance. A staff of honest and efficient keepers can easily prevent all intrusion, and by judicious heather-burning a fine head of game may quickly be raised. Great care, however, must be taken in burning, as I have seen excellent moors spoilt *for a time* by overburning, as well as others *permanently* injured by not being burned at all. As most lessees of grouse, however, cannot or will not buy off the sheep, it is on them that I chiefly inflict this letter.

First, I would assure them that landlords won't throw over sheep for grouse; but, for their consolation, I am equally confident that no experienced sheep-farmer of capital would overstock his ground; he would as soon think of overcropping it. Only needy adventurers, with very short or no leases, would be tempted to do either. Any farmer who did overstock or overcrop would be on the highway to ruin his farm. But grant that they do overstock to the utmost extent that can be claimed, will you go to the farmer with a long lease and tell him so? He replies that he will "put on what stock the land can keep—no restrictions on sheep-farming—free trade in mutton; that he has a right to regulate his own stock,"—and so he has. "But," says the grouse tenant, "are we to have no redress?" I answer, you must take your lease subject to these sheep drawbacks, and allow for them in your offer of rent. My brother, Sir James Colquhoun, always told the claimants for his farms, "Now take them with all their *game* drawbacks, as no deductions will be allowed afterwards." He was better than his word, and gave to each farmer a good share of the game killed on his farm. A little neighbourly feeling and kindness to the sheep-farmer, coupled with a few trifling presents to his shepherds, have often a wonderful effect in favour of the game.

"But," says some snack hand, "I will be up with them yet; I will take a game lease when the farm leases are out, and have clauses inserted limiting the sheep." How is he to enforce this? I had one of the best shepherds in Mor-

[redacted], who used to come to me and say, "There are strange sheep on our hills:" and to my query of how many, always replied that he could not say till the whole stock were gathered. Often there was a considerable number more than he suspected. This man knew all our sheep by head-mark, but I should like to know how many keepers could even count sheep. There would also be constant bickerings between the farmers and keepers, the former refusing to "hand" their sheep by gathering except when they pleased. But even if they *were* good-natured enough to gather when requested, no man who knew anything of grouse would have the folly to demand a gathering, as one sheep-collecting would do three times more mischief to grouse, either in the egg or when the young were weak, than the additional stock could possibly inflict. Add to which, you never can collect anything like the whole stock at one gathering.

But I have another reason, and perhaps the strongest of all, for not pushing matters so far. Don't squabble with the man who has as good a right for himself and shepherds to be on the ground at any time, *night or day*, as you have. I repeat it, he will find means to convince you that there was a better head of game on the hills before you limited his stock than afterwards. I know the hill-farmers well: they are a "dour" and sturdy race, and if you cross them you are sure to have the worst of it in the end.

To mollify the wool-baser, I can assure him that grouse are more numerous at present in many quarters than they were forty years ago, ere the grouse disease was known, and before the wild hirsel of the mountains had given so much place to the *heath-consuming sheep*.

JOHN COLQUHOUN.

May 1851.

Mr Colquhoun is the well-known author of 'The Moor and the Loch,' 'Salmon-Casts and Stray Shots,' &c., and his opinions on a subject of such importance as that which is in this letter are worthy of serious attention.

GROUSE DISEASE.

SIR,—I had determined to write no more on the subject now occupying the chief space of the Shooting column in 'The Field,' until called upon by Captain Stewart of Cairnsmore. In responding to his appeal, however, I shall keep as much as possible to matters of fact, without claiming scholarship by the "royal road" of Latin and Greek quotation.

I must first clear my ground by observing that no one whose opinion is worth anything, ever thought of denying that the change from cattle-grazing to sheep has done much injury to grouse. But while admitting the evil, we ought not, I think, to shut our eyes to the compensating good—viz., the thorough draining, &c., so necessary for sound sheep-pasture, which has been carried to a vast extent of late years, and is equally beneficial to grouse. Heather-burning is also being looked after more sharply by the owners of moors, not only as regards the quantity allowed, but the method of burning it; the most intelligent stock-farmers having discovered that the strip-and-patch fashion, so well adapted for the regular distribution of grouse, is likewise most conducive to the health and comfort of sheep. I therefore contend that the injury done by sheep has been greatly overrated by keen southern sportsmen; but even if true to the full extent they claim, the grouse-shooter has no remedy except by buying off the sheep, or paying rent both for grouse and sheep. If any one doubts this, let him try it. He will only embroil himself with farmers and shepherds, that's all. The landlord, he may depend on it, is not going to sacrifice any part of his valuable grazing rents (especially now when wool and stock are so high) merely to please a shooting tenant. There are too many men of fortune contending for Scotch grousing, to hold out any hope from that quarter.

Attempting to influence a proprietor to limit the sheep on his farms is the most foolish thing that can be done by

a tenant of grouse-shootings. The landlord won't help him to enforce the limitation, which is really quite impracticable. In the first place, the farm tenant may refuse to collect his sheep, which is always very injurious to them; added to which, it requires two or three gatherings to collect the whole stock. Again, sheep gathering is equally injurious to grouse, especially from the time when they begin to lay until the young birds are strong on wing. Lastly, the grouse tenant will lie under the disadvantage of having shown his teeth to the farmer, without being able to bite hard; while the latter, having free access for himself and shepherds to the moors, by night or day, will be able to bite hard without showing his teeth at all. If, however, the most greedy advocate of powder and shot could annihilate sheep, and exterminate our finest birds and beasts of prey, as he has nearly succeeded in doing, my conviction is that he would only bring back the grouse epidemic sooner, and with greater virulence. In one of the late letters to 'The Field' (which was briefly replied to by a young friend of mine last Saturday), a correspondent shrewdly inquires why the vast pheasant-preserve is exempt from disease? A moment's consideration might have enabled him to answer the question by analogy. Why do sheep on the Highland mountains die down to a certain limit when overstocked, whereas you may crowd as many as you please on the Lowland fields, provided you give them a sufficiency of turnip? Pheasants are fed to the full all winter with their natural food, and the preserve is, in fact, more like a poultry-yard, the birds being in a semi-domesticated state. Let their supply be withholden for a winter or two, and I am much mistaken if, in one way or other, nature does not assert its law.

In the year 1812, an independent Englishman, as the only means of gratifying his taste for grouse-shooting, purchased a Highland estate. No grousing could then be rented. When too old to travel the moors, he used to boast that his Scotch bargain was the best investment he had ever made. At this time vast tracts of our finest moorlands

were so ill looked after by their proprietors, as to be almost abandoned to poachers and vermin. At length, some one more needy or more greedy, certainly less fastidious, than his neighbours, let his shooting. His example was quickly followed, and the lessees of moors, of course, used every means to increase the head of game. In order to raise the value of their shootings, proprietors also commenced trapping and protecting, and the effect was soon apparent in the flourishing condition of the grouse. All went on well till 1822, when the mysterious blight on them appeared.

I shall now endeavour more directly to meet the question Captain Stewart desires, and, although I have had great experience in most parts of Scotland for the last thirty years, shall confine my remarks to the west coast, where grouse are less plentiful than in the north or centre. This is partly to be accounted for by the greater rainfall addling the eggs or drowning the poults; but I have lately been of opinion that the wet weather renders the heather scantier or less nutritious, and consequently less able to bear a heavy head of game, than the northern or Perthshire moors. The shootings I mean to take for examples are the Luss and Glenfruin ranges, belonging to my brother, Sir James Colquhoun; and Glenfalloch, the property of the Earl of Breadalbane. I took out my first licence in 1822, the year of the grouse disease, and, in company with my eldest brother, began my shooting practice on the Luss, Glenfruin, and Arrochar hills. In those times ten or twelve brace was reckoned an excellent day for three guns even when grouse were quite tame. We never saw a weak or diseased bird then, nor for twenty years afterwards. Poachers were plentiful, and "vermin" abundant. The golden eagle built in Glen Luss, so did several pairs of peregrines in the wilder cliffs. I have myself seen, in one season, three nests of that sylvan ornament the kite—one on an oak-tree on Rossdhu lawn, and the other two in the pine wood of an adjacent mountain. The marten was constantly flushed in the same pine wood, nay, even in the lower grounds; and the wild-cat was far from rare. In course of time my brother

engaged a first-rate Lowland gamekeeper (son and assistant of the Earl of Home's head keeper), whose trapping feats on the carnivora were even more exciting than anything the game could show. "Looking the traps" was quite an event; and the rarer, wilder, predatory birds and beasts rapidly disappeared. His successor—the late excellent and trustworthy head keeper[1] of the Luss estates—with his subs., completed the work; and when even the magpies had all vanished, and my brother interceded for one pair, by way of ornament to the pleasure-grounds, the keeper firmly replied, "'Deed, Sir James, if we preserve vermin, there's nae use in takin' care o' the gaem." Under Macdonald's able management the "gaem" accumulated as much as it could do on the west coast. Two guns have bagged between eighty and ninety brace the first day. But, alas! what was the result of this prosperity? The blasting murrain was upon them, and cut them down to nothing. Some bad breeding seasons afterwards contributed to keep them low, but by strict watching and good nursing they again began to thrive; and last October twelvemonth, when driving up Glenfruin with my brother, and the eminent antiquary Mr Fraser, to look over the site of the battle, I was quite amazed at the head of game. Of course I did not damp my brother's expectations for the next "12th," but said to my son, "I should not be surprised if the disease appears there before long." It broke out even sooner than I had expected, for last spring this fine crop of birds was again decimated. My brother, who is as genuine a grouse-sportsman as any in the kingdom, knows these facts to be true. In stating them, however, neither he nor I would wish any man to conclude that we think it desirable to spare the egg-destroyers, such as the raven, the carrion and Royston crows, or even such trash as weasels, stoats, polecats, &c.; but I can answer for it, if the golden eagle, the peregrine, or the kite were again to build on his estates, they would be allowed the free sweep of his heather without molestation.

[1] My friend Archie Macdonald died some years ago of heart-complaint, brought on by devotion to his duties.

Colonel Whyte asks how we are to prevent "that noble gentleman the peregrine putting his toe into the trap set for the ignoble 'hooded crow'"? I answer that I never knew a falcon trapped at a bait not struck down by itself—catch them at any other bait if you can! Should any "falcon protector" doubt this, he may easily destroy the *Corvidæ* by poisoned eggs in spring. As to the other mean kinds of winged and footed game-destroyers, they chiefly affect less lofty ground than that haunted by the high-minded tyrants of the mountain glen. Hence the risk of the latter being trapped by mistake is small.

I shall now contrast the adjoining shooting-ground of Glenfalloch, belonging to Lord Breadalbane, and I am also convinced that his lordship will bear me out in all I say. Until the death of the late gamekeeper (about two years ago), who had long been in failing health, the winged and footed creatures of prey were left to themselves. Last spring a pair of golden eagles had their eyrie on the southern hill; and in the autumn and early winter I frequently saw them *both* swooping over the principal shooting-range. A pair of peregrines built on the very confines of the finest grouse heights, which were likewise constantly beaten by a male hen-harrier. The mountain-fox is still numerous, and the marten and wild-cat not, I hope, quite gone. The shootings are fine exposed ranges, well adapted for grouse. During both years that I have rented them, I have made excellent bags, notwithstanding a very full stock of sheep, with all attendant horrors; and, as I lately wrote to Lord Breadalbane, have never seen or heard of one diseased bird.

What the grouse epidemic may be I do not pretend to guess, nor do I care to know. All I insist on is, that our Scottish mountains will never bear stocking of any kind, in a wild state, beyond a natural limit. If the stock, whether deer, sheep, grouse, or ptarmigan (for ptarmigan are very numerous on the northern Grampian chain), exceed that limit, they will perish, or, becoming weak and unprolific, dwindle down, unless supported by artificial means.

JOHN COLQUHOUN.

GLENFALLOCH, 1863.

COWAL SPORT.

So far as natural history and sporting knowledge are concerned, the renter of short-leased shootings has a great advantage over both landlords and tenants who prefer longer "tacks." No doubt frequent removes are both troublesome and expensive; but the erratic man has considerable compensation for his nomad life by the greater experience he gains in shooting and fishing, and (should he be a naturalist) by the opportunities it affords for collecting and extending his information.

For upwards of thirty years I have had shooting places in all parts of Scotland, besides the islands, and in all of them I have detected considerable change, both as regards the quality of the ground, and by consequence the various creatures that frequent it.

During my early and middle life I did my best to gather up and publish from time to time what I thought might interest the public; but of late years I have had the powerful help of my sons, who not only had an intuitive aptitude for the rod and gun, but from their earliest days took the keenest delight in all subjects connected with natural history. My present abode is our only summer home not already laid under contribution; and this being the third year of our lease, we have had plenty of time to detect its individual traits.

The shooting-ground forms a succession of hills, rising higher as they recede, and each when scaled giving a new and more extended prospect. The whole is included in that romantic district of Argyleshire called Cowal.

As I have generally observed in this wild county, the middle and lower heights are best for breeding-ground, for it requires either very rough heather (which my hills have not) or a very mild May and June to make the high ground keep pace with the lower and less exposed ranges. This

report will, I think, apply to most of the West Highland shootings. Season 1866 was a year of most uncommon abundance; then came two years of disease and dearth; now they are recovering again, and it depends on good or bad breeding years how long this scourge is kept off the Argyleshire moors.

A leading Scotch newspaper has lately been warning renters of shootings that their own deadly guns are chiefly to blame for grouse scarcity. If this writer is a sportsman, he must be of the Rip van Winkle type, for he tells us that we exterminated our most valuable game-bird, and that black-game are now also getting very scarce. Every Perthshire sportsman knows not only that capercailzie are multiplying year by year in that county, but that they are invading all those adjacent which have ground and woods fitted for their breeding and culture; that, nesting in colonies, they are of all game-birds the most easily preserved; and that many proprietors do not want them on their grounds, on account of their overbearing habits to other game. As for black-game, I remember when they were *really* scarce in the wilder districts; but since cultivation has been carried into the more remote straths and glens, they too have much increased. I suspect few true shooting sportsmen would like to see them more numerous than they are; for should they become so, it must be at the expense of grouse—a far more sporting bird.

This writer also denies that the blight of grouse can be from over-stock, as they were more plentiful before the disease than afterwards. Of course they were, for it was about six or seven years before 1822 that shootings began to be let, and the consequent rage for protection and the extermination of vermin began. The most superficial naturalist knows that there is a law by which, from the insect upwards, one race is kept in check by being the food of another; and, before the letting of moors came into fashion, our finest moorlands were left unchallenged to the wild birds and animals which had kept them within bounds from time immemorial.

But in those old days man also lent his aid to keep down the birds and beasts of game, for, in addition to the *local* poachers, whole hosts of *city* poachers sallied forth in August and September to these unprotected wilds, and supplied the game market. Of course, like the red man before his civilised brother, both vermin and poachers were displaced before the new race of moneyed sportsmen, who then came, not "into the field," but on the moor; and the birds, in place of being too much thinned, are, after good breeding years, often not nearly thinned enough. Without either vermin or poachers to help to reduce them, a few good breeding years are sufficient to overstock the grouse area we now have, lessened as it is partly by extended cultivation, but chiefly by wholesale and reckless heather-burning—to say nothing of the theory held by some sportsmen, that heather, of *itself*, is going back into grass.

I have no desire to combat the opinions of many experienced sportsmen as to the cause of grouse disease. One says it is from atmospheric changes, another from sheep-wash or sheep, a third from blighted or frosted heather, while a fourth gives the philosophic reason that it comes periodically of its own accord—having thus discovered the only instance in nature of effect without cause!

The disease of 1867-68, succeeded by a blighting May of the latter year *after a very warm April*, had nearly exterminated grouse on the Ballimore ranges. The spring of 1869 was a particularly good breeding one, but there were only a few stray birds to stock the whole hills. When I tried the ground with dogs before the "12th," the prospect was discouraging enough. Although there were scarcely any barren pairs, the packs were only found at long and weary intervals. "The kennel," however, was peculiarly suited to such a season. No "green ones" to make, save a very clever steady little pointer of famed pedigree, in her second season, and with an excellent nose.

My four other dogs were all seasoned workers, steady as rocks, and one of them entitled to class as first-rate. When

accompanied by my best pair of pointers, the services of my old retriever are quite superfluous. They will track at a slow walk a winged bird, and neither hurry nor *overfoot* should it run a hundred yards. When game "towers" at a distance, the sagacity and pains with which, under my guidance, they will quest every inch of possible ground, are truly wonderful. I broke the best of them entirely myself to these finishing-touches of dog-knowledge, by hunting him single-handed the whole autumn and winter of 1867. Quartering ground, steadiness on the point, "downing" at the rise of game, and freedom from hares, are the grounding which every dog must possess, or his master has no right to claim for him even the simple title of "good."

For some time before the 12th of August the weather had been of so broken and variable a character that even the "cheeper" packs sometimes sprang wild. In all my experience I never saw moor-game so fidgety before the season opened. The "12th," however, broke fine, and was followed by such a succession of excellent shooting-days as would be hard to match at any season of the year. Our packs being so scarce, and many of them "squeakers," we did not disturb the hills till the 16th, when the atmosphere had quite settled, and even soft moss was firm enough to be comfortably travelled.

I would here, from long practice, give a word of advice about grouse-dogs, which will not only reduce the expenses of the kennel, but, what is of more consequence, often save much annoyance and ill-temper on the moors. Most gentlemen have far too many dogs for the number of guns; the consequence is, that very few of them have the advantage of understanding their master thoroughly, or of being themselves understood by him. I am aware that many keen shooters will retort,—"Oh! but I never hunt my dogs more than three hours at a time, and have always three or four relays during the day. I can't stand shooting with gruelled dogs," &c.

With proper treatment for six weeks before the shooting

season, I will undertake that five *picked* dogs will do more work, and do it twenty times better, than fifteen trained in the slovenly, lazy manner which "the master" often never suspects. My plan is to give little medicine, and harden by degrees to their work. For six weeks before the "12th" they should be turned out at six o'clock in the morning, before they are likely to foul the kennel much, and made to run six miles behind a trotting horse. While they are out the kennel must be thoroughly cleaned, beds shaken up, &c., that when they return they may have a comfortable nap. If no fresh water runs through the troughs (which it always should), fresh water must be daily renewed when they are at exercise. At four o'clock they should again be taken, but by a careful man, for a walk—about the same distance along the hard road will be sufficient; and when they come back, let them be immediately fed and left snug for the night. They should always be on the couples for the evening walk, but for the morning trot they are better free. Twice a-week they should be breathed along the steep side of a mountain, to give them their wind.

Great care in the preparation of their food is indispensable. The mess must be carefully boiled, and should consist of oatmeal, potatoes, and the rough of the house mixed together. As much skimmed *boiled* milk as can be spared is excellent for giving a smooth coat to dogs, and should be poured over the mess after it is prepared. A good substitute for milk is the greasy washings of plates and dishes, which ought always to be kept for the purpose. I never use any of that abomination called cracklings or greaves. Of course it will be waste time to take so much trouble unless the dogs are *really* worth it.

No one who has not seen it would believe the amount of fatigue which a first-rate game-dog, treated on the system I have sketched out, will undergo. The more practice he has with a master equally perfect in *his* department, the more pleasant, steady, sure, and knowing on game he becomes.

With rambling, rash, headstrong dogs, a shooting-day on Ballimore hills after the few packs bred there this year would have been a trial instead of a pleasure; and, *per contra*, with soft, shirking, *faultless* brutes, the trial would have degenerated into simple disgust. I will, however, make bold to say that no grouse-shooters in Scotland have more thoroughly enjoyed their season than we have—certainly not *he* who pays a fabulous price for his overstocked moor, and whose bag could scarcely be diminished by walking up his birds without the assistance of dogs at all. By the help of our trustworthy dogs, we have not had one light bag this season; and the subjoined list of shooting-days can testify that the "slaughter" was quite sufficient to stimulate exertion and keep excitement alive.

August 16th—18½ brace, 10 hares, a couple of snipe; 18th—16½ brace, 6 blue hares, 2 red ones, a snipe and plover; 20th—18 brace grouse, 4½ brace black-game, 1 snipe, 7 hares; 25th—13 brace grouse, 1 couple snipe, 5 hares, 7 rabbits; 27th—14 brace grouse, 2 brace black-game, 7 hares, 1 rabbit; 30th—14 brace grouse, 3 brace black-game, 13 hares, 2 snipe; Sept. 1st—7 brace grouse, 2 brace black-game, 5 hares, 1 brace partridge, 5 rabbits. Many of the black-game were fine old cocks.

The whole range of hills has been systematically hunted—no favourite patches chosen, to the exclusion of more distant or laborious ground. The dogs have had full justice as to wind, &c., for finding the morning packs, and, whenever practicable, these have been broken for evening work.

When birds become at all wild, unless the shooter understands and can depend on his dogs, and his dogs understand and can depend on him *and his shooting*, the procuring of shots, far more the herding and scattering of the raised pack, is a difficult and often impossible process. I have already given directions about approaching wild grouse, so I shall simply repeat that to walk up to your dog at a point is perhaps the most likely way to lose your shot. You must cross him, head him, come down upon him from

heights — in fact, manœuvre according to circumstances. The better the sportsman, the more quickly and certainly will he perceive the best line of tactics; and the better trained the dog, the more will *he* comprehend and second every dodging *ruse* of his wary master. These are secrets of the moors which no dog or man who does not travel them from October to the end of the season can possibly find out. J. Colquhoun.

The grouse season of 1869 has now closed, and, as the moors are at present free from disease, if next spring should prove favourable, there must be a fair increase of birds.

On looking over the lists of rented moors in Scotland, the greater number are found to vary from 8000 to 20,000 acres. Many of these are highly-priced shootings of the first order, but the bag of the season even *on them* is seldom more than 1800 brace, while there are many really good and extensive moors where the total of the year is often under 600 brace. After about two months' sport the tenants generally leave the ground in charge of careful gamekeepers. These men make it their business and recreation to destroy any lingering remnants of predatory birds and beasts, and before their ever-wary eye no poacher dares to show his face.

If a succession of good breeding years *unfortunately* follow each other, the birds, seldom half shot down, multiply with wonderful rapidity, until the ground can bear no more. When disease breaks out, the sportsmen, who had before been congratulating themselves on their grouse prospects, are proportionably disappointed, and fix on any cause for the mortality (except one) which the ingenuity of their hill governors can suggest. But should any of these lessees be *battue* and game drivers from the south, they will gratefully accept any or every plausible reason offered them for grouse disease, if they are only allowed without compunction to accumulate birds for the ephemeral season of—shall we say sport or slaughter?

Some old stagers assert that the disease was known before 1822. They mean doubtless tapeworm, for the malady proper never appeared until that year. It is somewhat significant that none of the causes assigned by grouse-preservers of the present day—such as changes of atmosphere, heather-blight, &c.—had power to produce the malady before 1822, and that they only take effect now after a surplus of birds. So long as the race between game and sheep tenants lasts—one to increase the head of grouse, and the other to cut short their means of living[1]—our moors will always be liable, at longer or shorter terms, to the scourge of grouse disease.

I have heard it stated firmly that there are counties in Scotland where grouse remain as tame all winter as they are in August. This is a great mistake. No doubt places might be found where, from fineness of climate, and its consequence, rank luxuriant heather, birds are far less shy and fidgety *the whole year* than in most of the other grouse haunts. But when, from the effects of the first cold weather, these same favoured birds become strong and full-fledged, they are *in proportion* quite as wild as their brethren reared in a less genial temperature. It stands to reason that when birds grow old, strong, and cunning, they should be more inclined—especially after being fired at—to take care of themselves. It is this instinct, therefore, of self-preservation, which makes it so difficult, since moor-letting has become almost universal, to keep them within bounds.

To their former foes, the vermin, it did not matter whether grouse were wild or tame, as *they* found no difficulty in destroying the usual daily supply all the year round. The old poacher, too, although usually inferior to the present race of sportsmen as a shot, was far their supe-

[1] Of late years farmers have to a considerable extent wintered their hill-stock in the low lands; their object being to burn as much heather as they possibly can for summer grass. This knowing dodge vastly curtails the grouse-ground, and would have been ruinous to sheep if left on the bare, blackened, wintry hills, which could afford them neither food nor shelter.

rior in every other quality of moor-knowledge. He was able, when birds had become winter-wild, to procure six *fair* shots for one that most modern grouse-shooters could do, not to mention many sitting chances, when he often bagged three or four birds at one discharge.

JOHN COLQUHOUN.

BALLIMORE HOUSE, KILFINAN, ARGYLE,
December 31, 1870.

ADDITIONAL FRAGMENTS.

BIRDS OF PREY AND GROUSE.

Intelligent game tenants are now rapidly being convinced of the real evil the wholesale destruction of birds and beasts of prey entails on grouse, and protect rigidly the nests and eyries of the former should they hatch on their shooting-ground. A golden eagle builds every year in Glen Fyne, within half a mile of the Lodge; and my son, who was the guest of the lessee for the greater part of a season, assured me that his host and he, most days they were after grouse or deer, saw the old ones teaching the newly flown nestling to hunt for prey—the parents in front and the pupil a little behind, evidently getting a lesson. Soon after the sportsmen left for the winter, the head-keeper caught the old male in a trap intended for "hoodie-craws"! The widow and young one soon afterwards disappeared; but the former returned the next spring with a fresh husband, hatching in another eyrie about twenty yards from the former one, and rearing a second hopeful.

When grouse became wild, the shooting tenant of Glenfeshie used the common device of flying a kite over them to make them "clap," as the keepers call it. The kite, however, was modelled exactly after an eagle; but when performing its duties most satisfactorily, a *bonâ fide* eagle rushed from a precipice at his insulting counterfeit, and fastening on it, tore away until they came within three yards of the ground. The assailant could easily have been shot, but the royal bird was strictly preserved in that forest.

The sportsman was Mr Thornhill, M.P. for West Suffolk, and son of the Suffolk squire mentioned in 'The Moor and the Loch' as having shot a female bustard flying from one of his coverts to another. He related the above curious fact to my son when shooting in company at Castle Grant, and which had happened a week or two before.

As might be expected, gamekeepers were the last to allow that too many birds caused the disease. There were honourable exceptions, but most of them gave their masters other reasons for the fearful blight. One sagacious fellow, however, as soon as he perceived an overstock, besought his master to "kill them doon by fair means or foul—ahint dykes—a dizzen at a time if possible." This was surely an unspoken admission, which he dared not avouch, that his own handiwork caused the disease.

In conclusion, I am much pleased to record that the grander birds of prey are now preserved at nesting time in many of the wilder shootings and forests; and I sincerely trust that our most interesting animals, such as the marten and wild cat—nay, even the foumart and badger (now rare enough)—will receive some share of the same patriotic forbearance.

JOHN COLQUHOUN.

OMARA HOUSE, 1882.

GROUSE DISEASE.

The following is in answer to a writer in 'The Field,' who quotes a letter from the minister of Kildonan, in Caithness, on the authority of the late Mr Dunbar, lessee of Brawl Castle, to prove that the grouse disease broke out in the last century:—

THE EARLIEST RECORD OF THE GROUSE DISEASE.

SIR,—I am sorry to say that I cannot accept the letter of the minister of Kildonan, quoted by "W. A. A.," as evidence that *the* grouse disease broke out last century.

In 1822 *a* disease appeared amongst the grouse of the north, which the ablest sportsmen, naturalists, and medical men agreed had never before been known on our moors. That season was one I well remember, for it was then my first licence was taken out.

Many old sportsmen, and amongst them my father, had shot grouse annually long before the end of last century. Not one of them had ever heard of such an outbreak amongst the grouse at that time.

From twenty to thirty years afterwards, when the "overstocking controversy" began, all observant men had noticed that it always attacked the grouse when there was a great increase of birds.

Along with a host of other keen sportsmen, I took an active part in the discussions on the subject. Mr Dunbar, however, though at one time a keeper of the late Duke of Sutherland's, and latterly letting grouse-shootings to the public, and ready enough to take up his pen when occasion or opportunity offered, never alluded to this letter.

Yet we are asked to accept a testimony which Mr Dunbar himself never thought it worth his while to cite publicly; and the object of doing so is to prove that the grouse is the only creature which may transgress the laws of nature

with impunity, "overstock" not being the cause of the grouse disease.

I am well aware that grouse have suffered sometimes from tapeworm and other maladies locally; but no authority of any note ever claimed the appearance of what is generally known as the "grouse disease" till 1822.

JOHN COLQUHOUN.

1 ROYAL TERRACE, EDINBURGH,
December 19, 1882.

Reply to another, asserting there was disease in the Lovat country in 1817:—

FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE GROUSE DISEASE.

SIR,—I thought I had been sufficiently explicit in my last letter, but it appears this has not been the case.

From my schoolboy days I have known that grouse diseases have broken out now and then in detached districts of moorland; but never before 1822 was there a scourge which spread over the whole moors of the kingdom, returning for the last sixty years whenever three or four good breeding seasons in succession have produced an overstock of birds.

For this state of matters we are indebted to moor-letting, to over-preservation, and to "over-keepering."

JOHN COLQUHOUN.

1 ROYAL TERRACE, EDINBURGH,
January 18, 1882.

When a tried sportsman like Mr Milbank gives a straightforward reason for grouse disease—viz., blighted heather, caused by spring frosts—he has a right to have his opinion fairly tested, which a few years more or less will certainly prove. When, however, a man gives two or even three different causes for the grouse blight, it is plain he is simply hedging, and that his opinion is not worth the paper on which

it is written. For my own part, though honouring the sportsman who has the "courage of his convictions," my opinion is quite at variance with Mr Milbank's, for the following reasons:—

In the year 1840 I had a five years' lease of Leny shootings. During the winter of the second year of my term there was one of the hardest and longest frosts I ever remember. All our largest lochs were frozen over; and though there was a thaw about the middle of January, the frost returned in February, lasting the whole month, the night frosts continuing the chief part of March.

The time is fresh in my memory, for it was with great difficulty I prevented my moor from being ruined by heather-burning, the ground in March proving as hard as a rock, and the heather as combustible as touchwood. The only comfort I received from the farmers was their assurance that they "michtna hae sic anither chance for twenty years"! If ever the tender heather-shoots were sure of a blight, then must have been their time; and if they escaped, nothing else was so fortunate. However, the following August brought a fine supply of grouse, and not a diseased bird was to be seen. The three remaining years of my lease were excellent. There was no disease, and from having a better knowledge of the ground, my bag was increased each successive season to the end of my term.

THE "HUNTER'S BADGE."

(*To 'The Field.'*)

Sir,—Having been often asked whether foreign trophies should count for the "hunter's badge," it appears to me that such could never have been the old Highlander's meaning, as he undoubtedly referred only to the British Islands.

In securing any of the four famous prizes, we must try, if possible, to put ourselves on a level with the sportsmen of those bygone days.

As to eagles and seals, with the exception of our improved rifles and fowling-pieces, we have little or no advantage over our sporting progenitors; and if the eagle or seal is fairly shot and bagged, no more can be required.

The case is quite different with regard to salmon and red deer. Concerning the former, a relative of my own, a lady, killed an 8-lb. salmon when trolling for the first time in her life; and a friend of mine boated three the first day he ever handled a rod. It must thus be apparent to any practical fisher that the chief merit of catching these salmon belonged to the boatmen, who must have done their part in a masterly manner. Therefore, in my opinion, all salmon caught by trolling or boat-fishing are disqualified. The angler must hook and play his salmon with fly from the river's bank without advice or guidance from any one, and gaff or land it himself unaided by a "gillie."

With regard to red deer, he must be indeed a "muff" who failed to shoot one the first good drive he attended; for, if well placed, he would most likely secure half-a-dozen excellent chances. Driven deer, therefore, should certainly not count.

The idea of park red deer entitling the shooter to the badge is almost as ridiculous as the proposal of a sly gamekeeper to a lessee of shootings who was very eager to bring down an eagle. "Weel, sir, I trappit ane twa days syne, an' as he wasna' a preen the waur, I could jist let him aff at yer fit, an' ye could say ye shootit him fleein', an' naebody be a bit the wiser."

Had any sportsman been so dishonest and dishonourable as to take him at his word, the first time this keeper was over his whisky with his boon companions he would most likely have boasted of this feat as one of the best tricks he ever played off on his betters.

To shoot a red deer fairly, it ought to be sighted, stalked, and shot on the open hill, without help or advice from any one. All artificial means—such as sunk fences in the deer-forest, and stepping-stones at the salmon-pools—I have

already written are Cockney inventions, at which the old Highlander would have growled his disgust.

I am aware I may be twitted as inciting aspirants to the "hunter's badge" to shoot the greatest ornament of our mountain scenery. If, however, the destruction of eagles were confined to badge trophies, and all keepers restricted from trapping or interfering with the royal bird, the few shot by sportsmen would never be missed, and the chief protectors of the eagle would be those who had gained the badge.

Messrs Millidge, goldsmiths, Princes Street, Edinburgh, have lately struck the "hunter's badge" in gold very effectively; but it can be had either in silver or bronze, according to the taste of those who require it.

JOHN COLQUHOUN.

1 ROYAL TERRACE, EDINBURGH,
May 1, 1882.

The following letters of "Shikari" and "C. M." in 'The Field' were written chiefly in reply to a puerile effusion, in which the writer avers he could secure the famous four in a fortnight!! and also proclaims that he might easily have shot them before, but always magnanimously refrained!

THE HUNTER'S BADGE.

SIR,—The four paragraphs that Mr Speedy has written, in attempting to make clear that a mere novice in the first week of his sporting career can bring to bag some of the finest specimens that fall to the gun of a sportsman, have signally failed to do so.

The shooting of a seal and securing it are two things that do not always go hand in hand. I should suppose that Mr Colquhoun meant that the game should be secured as well as shot, and that everything connected with the killing and securing of the game should be done *single-handed.*

I think Mr Speedy, and all those who recognise that there is no difficulty in shooting a seal, will also recognise that there is some difficulty in securing it, and, for my own part, I think in shooting one.

The same argument will apply to salmon. It is ridiculous for Mr Speedy to state that the "greatest novice" can kill a salmon single-handed.

The deer that Mr Speedy was viewing the other day must have been in a very favourable position, if an old woman could have successfully stalked and shot one. It does not always fall to the lot of the stalker to get his quarry in such a favourable situation.

Judging from the way your correspondent writes of the deer, and taking as granted so many things that he has done in his letter, I should not overshoot the mark if I said they were tame ones.

There is one thing which sportsmen and naturalists will gladly accept in Mr Speedy's letter, which shows there are still plenty of eagles in the Highlands, as Mr Speedy acknowledges visiting a number of eyries in one week.

Messrs Millidge state that, as far as they are concerned, what I suggested in my former letter will be carried out, and that the badge will not be supplied to any one who will not give a written guarantee of his right to wear it.

No doubt, as Mr Colquhoun was the one to suggest the badge being struck, he will supply some further details or rules that must be adhered to. SHIKARI.

SIR,—I quite agree with your correspondent Mr Speedy that the institution, or re-institution, of a "hunter's badge" (even if introduced under the ægis of so great a sportsman as Mr Colquhoun) would prove an unmitigated nuisance, and a direct incentive to that worst form of so-called sport, pot-hunting. But some of the statements which Mr Speedy makes use of to illustrate his argument are so extraordinary —especially those connected with this part of the world— that I cannot refrain from making a few remarks upon them.

I would tell Mr Speedy that seals are not "inoffensive animals." They are most destructive to salmon running up the sea lochs. There have been a good many about Chanonry Point during the last month, and a few days ago one bit a fish in two in the net, before the fisherman's eyes. Seals have wonderful eyes and ears, and unless stalked over very favourable ground, which is not usually met with here, or unless a position is taken up at high water, and they are waited for until they come up on the uncovered banks, it is very rarely that a shot can be obtained under several hundred yards. If the seal is in the water, only the head is visible, and if struck, the body sinks and is seldom recovered. It is quite possible for a volunteer to have shot a seal on the Beauly river, which in the part apparently referred to is not broader than from thirty to fifty yards; but had he shot a seal at sea, he might have hugged himself on his good marksmanship.

Salmon, I allow, are not so difficult of capture by a decent angler. But Mr Speedy says: "Let the *greatest novice* have a day's fishing on the Aray, the Alness, the Garry, or other rivers which rumble down their rocky beds with impetuous force, and, *though his line may be thrown in in a bunch at the point of his rod*, before even the current has got it straightened, his fly *may* be seized by a salmon which, on raising his rod [not striking the fish, mark you], is hooked securely. Such was my experience in the river Beauly in killing my first salmon."

The italics and parenthesis are mine. Mr Speedy is a lucky sportsman, but he must congratulate himself and his salmon on being rather unique specimens of their kind. As for the general public, Mr Speedy disposes of their chances with the word "may." This convenient "may" at once reduces the argument from probabilities to possibilities. As for the phenomenon aged thirteen, who killed two salmon in a day, I have seen boys of ten who were capital salmon-fishers.

As to stags, the keeper at Strathconan told Mr Speedy

that "any old wife" could stalk the stags which he saw in a certain position. The keeper certainly did not refer to Mr Speedy, for it is evident that that gentleman never shot a stag in his life. If he had, he would have experienced all the nervousness and over-zeal of the beginner, as well as the hundred and one little mischances that frequently spoil the stalk of the oldest and coolest hand. I have shot over ground marching with Strathconan for nearly thirty years, and it may therefore be taken for granted that I have some knowledge of the Strathconan ground, and the sport it affords. I believe that I am within the mark (though I have no authoritative data at hand to go by) in saying that the average number of stags killed by the tenant in this magnificent forest during the last four or five years has not exceeded eighty beasts per annum. The ground is very extensive, and the herds of deer large. I see that Mr Guinness has taken Strathconan Forest for this year. If abnormal bags are desirable, perhaps Mr Speedy would counsel the invitation of a few deadly sporting "old wives," who, no doubt, according to his view, might speedily raise the average.

I quite agree with Mr Speedy that eagle-slaughter is very much to be deprecated. The lordly eagle is the very quarry whose destruction rejoices the ignoble soul of the pot-hunter. I have always thought that our hawk tribe are too much kept down for the good of the grouse, and that diseased birds, which would under other circumstances be killed off in large numbers, are allowed to mingle with their fellows, and thus spread infection wider. The eagle poised in air, the very embodiment of conscious power, his massive form reflected on the blue bosom of Loch Maree, and his broad pinions shadowed against the lofty brow of Ben Slioch, is a theme alike for the poet and the painter. Alive, he is a lord of creation; dead, he is only a receptacle for dust and moths. By all means let us preserve our remaining eagles, ospreys, and peregrine falcons. But if the "sportsman's badge" is to become a living thing, it ought

to be conferred upon Mr Speedy. Horatio Ross I believe to be the only man who ever stalked and photographed a wild stag in his native glen; and there can be few men like Mr Speedy, who has recently "visited a number of eyries, and with some should have had no more difficulty in looking over the crag and shooting the eagle, than in shooting a swan on Duddingstone Loch." Mr Speedy is to be envied. I also have seen eyries in my time, but have hitherto looked up to, and not down upon them. But never have I looked up to them as I now look up to Mr Speedy as a judge of Highland sport. C. M.

FORTROSE, *May* 15.

The suggestions of "Shikari" are well worth adopting, and I shall gladly use any influence I have in promoting them. To win the badge, in accordance with the views of the old Highlander, we must try (so far as possible) to place ourselves in the position and circumstances of those bygone days—*i.e.*, to do away with the artificial means afforded us over our sporting progenitors.

In 'The Moor and the Loch,' vol. i. p. 166, comes the following sentence: "What would the ancient Hillman have thought of forests where the deer are nearly as tame as sheep, and so numerous as to be dwarfed both in size and antlers?" In vol. ii. p. 219, I have written what I am sure would have been the feelings of the Gael of ancient days on our modern sporting: "To kill deer or salmon is about the easiest sporting of the present day. The half-tame herds of modern forests are easily stalked; and driving deer, like grouse-drives, is a lazy method of procuring chances without labour or skill."

"Then how are we," asks many a promising young sportsman, "to put ourselves on a level with the Highlanders of yore?" I shall try to give a satisfactory answer to such a question.

There are many tracts of our wildest moors let as grouse-

shootings, where the hirsel have not yet been removed, resembling the Highlands before there was reserved ground for deer. When there has been hard driving in the forests, a few of the wildest deer leave them always for such refuges. The constant presence of shepherds, collies, tourists, &c., makes these deer continually on the alert; and if the stalker can sight them before they sight him, he is proved to have the true sporting eye. Should this be the case, the stalk will need much tact and knowledge. No one unprepared for hardy endurance need attempt it.

Such ground as described I have often rented—capital examples of which are Leny, Glenfalloch, and Arrochar, all of which I had on lease, knowing well every corrie and mountain in their rugged beats. To illustrate my meaning I may be allowed to give an account of one of the last days' stalking my eldest son had on the hills surrounding Loch Sloy.

At the top of the Arrochar beat we had for gillie a man formerly a mountain shepherd, having a fine eye for deer by constant practice. We took down also with us a Low-land keeper, who, having seen some deer-forests, fancied himself as expert as the *quondam* shepherd at the big game. My son always took the Celt with him the day after there had been a hard drive in the Black Mount; but on the said day the mountain gillie was ill, so the Sassenach took his place. His helpless stare for the few deer that might be anywhere on that great waste was "rare nuts" to my son. As the day wore on they could spy nothing but sheep, or a solitary shepherd with his collie. My son meanwhile had the misfortune to knock the sight off his rifle in threading a birch coppice. By this time they had gone over an immense tract of ground, almost giving up hope of deer. My son amused himself by cutting a wooden sight with his knife, and, after a few shots at a mark, set the rifle to 100 yards. Perseverance often succeeds when hardly expected. Day was closing, while sportsman and keeper were getting wearied. My son suddenly spied a

ordinary lines at very long distance. It was with difficulty the gentleman could take it up, but he was desired to be lower still till his master fixed. After two hours' stalk he got within eighty yards of his quarry, when it dropped to shot. The wooden sight was preserved as a curiosity, and the head is in my collection.

Let me be forgiven referring again to 'The Moor and the Loch' to explain what I should imagine the old Highlander meant would entitle a man to the salmon trophy. In vol. ii. p. 354 may be found the following opinion: "It is only in a stream of considerable bounds that the eminent angler can fully display his power. Those brawling brooks which can be commanded by a grilse-rod, are not much akin to trouting to such his taste." And at page 356, vol. ii.: "However one may admire the dexterity of a master of the river as he casts his line between every opening among trees in a difficult river, yet I would rather see him manage his fish after hooking it. The cool nerve and delicate touch are the very perfection of art, and I should never pronounce a man a true salmon-fisher till I had seen him working one in a difficult situation," &c.

As mentioned before, we must take such rivers as the Tweed, the Dee, the Deveron, the Beauly, or the Spey to prove our skill—rivers which need the full pitch of a long line to reach most of the casts: and, when the salmon is fixed, will give him fair play to dash out eighty yards and to use all his arts to run or drown the angler.

As for the brawling northern brooks, which may be commanded by a grilse-rod, and where the current is so rapid that no coarseness of line will scare the fish, it is childish to mention them as qualifying the angler for the badge. There the fisher has only to run down the bank opposite the prisoner, who has no space allowed him in the narrow stream to foil his tormentor. The latter, by main force, tugs him along in the rough tackle till he is laid on the bank, without skill either in the hooking or the play.

In 'The Moor and the Loch,' vol. i. p. 166, I have

written: "As to the seal, the second last on the list, let any one try to bag one under the most favourable auspices, and he may find the task less easy than it appears."

Two young friends of mine—both good rifle-shots—each bagged a seal, one at Taynaish (in Kintyre), the other near Dunstaffnage; but though thus encouraged to try eagerly for another, neither to the end of the season was successful.

Two years ago a farmer in the north, with the reputation of being one of the best rifle-shots in the district, assured me that in hind-shooting the year before he killed eleven in succession without picking his shots, and firing at all within fair reach. It was first-rate rifle practice! On inquiring if he had ever tried his hand on seals, he answered —"Aweel, sir, I went doon to a freen' o' mine on the coast, and fired between twenty and thirty shots at seals; but I missed every one!"

Dominies and prentices, with those who back you, take warning by such experience!

Lastly, the royal eagle. Most of the proprietors of forests preserve strictly the eagles at hatching time; and, when the forests are let, the lessees are tied down not to shoot them. This, I am glad to think, was done by some at my suggestion. Even were it otherwise, I do not believe many of the game tenants would come down in the spring even to shoot an eagle. Let keepers and gillies be muzzled, and the eagle will increase, as has been the case of late.

Most of the eagle trophies will be shot in the autumn after the eaglets have flown, and those killed will be hardly ever missed.

Young men eager to gain the "hunter's badge," try for yourselves; and I feel sure that, under the conditions named, you will find it is no easy task to win the distinction. JOHN COLQUHOUN.

The following burlesque on this boast appeared in another paper shortly afterwards:—

THE HUNTER'S BADGE.

SIR,—Last season, having perfect confidence that I could gain the "hunter's badge" in a fortnight, I started for a northern forest, where there were two golden eagles' eyries within easy distance of each other. On reaching one, the two eagles kept "*whirling*" backwards and forwards within twenty-five yards of my stance. "What a shame," I thought, "to murder these glorious specimens of the feathered race!" I refrained from firing, but wishing to have a look at the other eyrie, was soon abreast of it, when I caught sight of the old male on a point of rock, thirty yards off, and on moving the female she sat down close to her mate. I could easily have strung both at one shot, but conscientiously held my hand, although my finger touched the trigger. That was the proudest day of my sporting life.

My place being taken in a Western Isles steamboat for the seal trophy, I soon looked down upon such multitudes of these amphibiæ swimming and rollicking in a bay that I could have slain "any amount" of them that day, but why should I destroy these "innocent creatures"?

Having leave from the proprietor of a deer-forest, I engaged an "old wife," who stalked them so scientifically, that I am sure I could have dropped a score at least, but felt I had not the heart to shoot at the graceful creatures. Well, says I to myself, since you have proved equal to such self-control, why not extend it to the salmon also? Why should my relentless line stop his brilliant career of dashing over cataracts and splashing through rapids? No; rather let me set an example and give a reproof to that ruthless promoter of THE HUNTER'S BADGE.

Reply to Blairgowrie, asking for additional details about the Badge:—

SIR,—I should be exceedingly sorry to be assumptious or dogmatical about the "hunter's badge," and consider that all true sportsmen ought to be entitled to speak as they like with regard to it. Let me be allowed, however, to confess a great respect for my mountain progenitor's opinion of what constituted a thorough Highland hunter of those days. Any who feel contempt for his uncompromising assertion can of course withhold their sympathy, though no doubt the proud old Gael would have returned the compliment, and with interest.

Let me now answer my brother sportsman of Blairgowrie in a way which I hope will be clear to all interested in the question.

First, no deer shot on reserved ground—*i.e.*, deer-forest—could possibly have been meant by the "Old Celt." Therefore, to gain the deer trophy, a man must get leave to go out *by himself* on any of the vast moors and mountains of the Highlands (not forest). Then he must sight, stalk, and kill the deer, and his first triumph is won.

The salmon trophy is not so easy to define, but still I hope to clear up that question too, satisfactorily. The chief difficulty is to block out those grilse-rod streams, which no accomplished salmon-angler would allow to be a fair test of skill. It would not be a very hard matter to get a printed list of all the salmon-rivers of size enough in each county of Scotland to test a salmon-fisher. He might make his choice—one after another, if he likes—of the rivers, only he must be restricted to fly and single gut. He must go to the river alone, then hook, play, land, or gaff his fish without any help. It appears to me that such an exploit would be quite easy to a tolerable angler.

With regard to seals, let any man who has tried them for a season remember the vast number of shots he has fired in consideration of the few *Phocæ* he has secured, and I am sure he will not call seal-killing easy. Only the ignoramus, who has seen them sweltering in great numbers in their breeding bays, would be tempted to hazard such

an opinion. No seal-shooter need have any compunction in firing at those so-called "inoffensive creatures"; for he would think his pity wasted if he were to see, as I have, a fisherman's nets cut to pieces, the salmon in them destroyed, and the poor owner of the nets, with a wife and family, disappointed of their daily support.

Respecting the eagle, I have been meanly twitted, and my own evidence quoted (!) as proof that I had the disgrace of shooting an eagle flying off its eyrie. That story is easily accounted for. From my early days I began to collect birds and animals shot by my own gun. The museum increasing, my enthusiasm followed suit. I coveted a golden eagle as a miser does his treasure. It is more than forty years since two of these noble birds fell to my shots in the Black Mount, and I have never fired at one since. At that time a large reward was given to every forester or gillie who trapped or shot an eagle; and, if I had not forestalled them, the foresters would certainly have secured both birds.

It is even asserted by one who has never tried, that nothing is easier than to shoot a female eagle flying from the nest. Had this self-approved shot been placed, as I was, on the ledge of a dizzy chasm, where the footing was very insecure, with the certainty it was needful to hold as straight as if shooting with ball, to drop the eagle dead, I think he would have crowed to a lower note! The least quiver of nerves (and my critic may be assured there was cause to try the strongest), the bird would either have been missed, or, if not wing-broken, would have flown away, a leg hanging down, or a handful of feathers dusted out. Meanwhile the discomfited sportsman would have been the laughing-stock of the forest.

Another critic might argue, "It was needless to shoot two of these noble birds." This objection is easily answered too. The first bird shot had three of its claws trapped off, and I desired a perfect specimen. If guilty of the crime of shooting these eagles, it has long ago been atoned for, as I was the first to suggest that the queens of the air should be

protected on their thrones; and since their preservation at hatching time has been so much adopted, eagles are now increasing in the North and West Highlands.

JOHN COLQUHOUN.

SIR,—I would suggest that all sportsmen obtaining the badge should give the different localities where each trophy was brought to bag, and that a small pamphlet should be issued yearly, giving the names and residences of the holders of the badge, and the localities where the trophies were obtained.

I think sportsmen that had *really* killed the different trophies would have no objection to it, and it would in some measure debar unprincipled persons from making use of practices referred to in Mr Colquhoun's letter.

If something of this kind is not done, I am afraid more eagles will have been brought to bag than have appeared in the British Isles for the last century. SHIKARI.

May 6, 1881.

SIR,—The subject of the "hunter's badge" is wellnigh exhausted, and, but for your correspondent "Shikari's" wish that I should take the lead in reviving the order, you would in all likelihood have heard no more from me about it. I am now unequal to the task in which I might have revelled of yore, but I still own to a warm side for this ancient and romantic order of hunters, which, modified to meet the change of conditions in the present day, might, I am sure, be resuscitated through the agency of a hunters' club—honour its only code. In addition to patron and president, it might have a small council to take the management, keep the hunters' book, and issue warrants to wear the badge, having decided that the trophies have been secured in strict accordance with the object of the club.

Most of the plucky "coming" sportsmen of the day are pretty sure to try for it; and should the effects of un-

ripened grapes be very apparent in some of the older members of the trigger, they must only be received good-humouredly. JOHN COLQUHOUN.

OMARA HOUSE.

THE THRUSH.

SIR,—In reply to your correspondent of this morning, I may be allowed to say a few words about the thrush. There are four species in this country—two migrants and two residents. The missel-thrush sings so early that it is sometimes heard in a snowdrift, from which habit its *sobriquet* of "storm-cock" is derived. Being so overbearing to other birds, it is called in England "the king of the coppice." It builds as early as March, and generally in the fork of a tree. The song-thrush or mavis sings and builds later, most often in a bush or hedgerow, though occasionally, too, in a tree. It always sings from the perch, while the missel-thrush sometimes tunes up its loud defiant note on wing. Of the two migrants the redwing arrives in this country in October, while the fieldfare comes a little later. The local names of the latter are "felfares" and "feltyfares," contracted to "felties." These birds are very loud and obtrusive in their habits, and I have often seen about a hundred on one rowan-tree screaming and fighting for the berries. The redwing is constantly confounded with the common thrush; indeed hardly one man in fifty knows the difference. They arrive on the British shores in small companies, which soon unite, and at first they frequent much moist meadows, for the sake of the worms, &c. As winter advances, and slugs and worms grow scarce, these birds resort to hedgerows and bushes, like fieldfares, for berries. I have never heard a local name for the redwing, as it is generally mistaken for a thrush. Neither the fieldfare nor the redwing breeds in this country, except in very rare cases, but both have a melodious warble in the countries where they hatch.

Noticing the spring songs of the mavis in this neighbourhood, I should think there will be a fair average of thrushes' nests in 1882.—I am, &c. JOHN COLQUHOUN.

1 ROYAL TERRACE, EDINBURGH, *May* 8.

SIR,—Allow me to thank Mr Marjoribanks and "Another Observer" for their kind allusions to my last letter in your columns. From my boyhood I always heard the Lochlomond peasantry call the fieldfare a "feltyfleear" or "felty." At none of my many shooting-places all over Scotland did I ever hear ploughman, shepherd, gillie, or gamekeeper call the missel-thrush by that name, which they always applied to the fieldfare. Mr Marjoribanks's observation that in severe winters the four species of thrush, also blackbirds, live almost entirely on berries, I can fully corroborate. When the fruit of the rowan, the hawthorn, and holly is plentiful, the country people say it is the sign of a hard winter—"as a providential supply for the birds." All the four kinds of thrush, as well as blackbirds, therefore much frequent hedgerows, as the haw lasts well through the storm. In Bute I noticed once a cock blackbird during a hard frost nip off and swallow whole, half-a-dozen large snowberries with great avidity.—I am, &c.,

JOHN COLQUHOUN.

1 ROYAL TERRACE, EDINBURGH, *May* 11.

SIR,—Allow me to thank "S." for kindly giving me the opportunity of an explanation about the thrush question. In my collection I have a missel-thrush, a mavis, a fieldfare, a redwing, a blackbird, and a ring-ousel, or moor blackbird, all in the same case, called my "thrush compartment."

Though all these birds are of the *Turdus* family, the blackbird and moor blackbird are also ousels, the former called the black ousel, and the other the ring or rock ousel. There is also a third ousel—viz., the little dipper or water-

ousel. Any of your correspondents wishing to see all these specimens are most welcome to call at my house and inspect them.—I am, &c., JOHN COLQUHOUN.

1 ROYAL TERRACE, *May* 1882.

THE GOWK AND THE TITLING.

SIR,—Having noticed the accompanying paragraph in a local paper—from the pen, evidently, of an observer of nature,—you will, I hope, allow me to clear up the difficulty through the medium of your columns:—

"THE CUCKOO.—The general impression prevailing is, that in its flight the cuckoo is invariably accompanied by a small bird here and there called the titling; but 'W. E. H.,' in his 'Notes from the North' in the 'Pictorial World,' assures us that such is not the case, from personal observations made by himself in various parts, extending from Skye to North Wales."

When the note of the "bird of spring" first enlivens our dells, and long after it has "changed its tune," no titling attends the old birds. There is, indeed, a bird—the wryneck—called the cuckoo's mate; but the only reason for this nomenclature is, that they both arrive in this country at the same time. They never keep company at all.

The cuckoo's most romantic haunts may be explored on its first appearance, to find it always unattended by any little bird. As is well known, the cuckoo lays its only egg in a small soft-billed bird's nest.

If, like the nightjar, it lays two, instinct warns it to deposit the second in a separate nest. The foster-parent hatches this egg along with its own, but would be quite unable to feed so large a bird as well as its own nestlings.

As they begin to grow strong and ravenous, nature teaches the young cuckoo to hoist the little titlings with its shoulders, one by one, over the side of the nest, till none remains but its greedy self, giving the little mother

plenty of trouble to rear and provide for it. Like all other birds, the titling keeps guard carefully over its reputed young one, and after it leaves the nest never deserts it till it is quite able to supply its own wants. During the time of its education "the gowk and the titling" are always together, and I have often seen the latter feeding its supposed giant progeny. All these cuckoos, dependent on the efforts of the titling for food, have, as may be remarked, short tails, proving that they are birds of the year. They do not migrate till after they are abandoned by the titling. —I am, &c., JOHN COLQUHOUN.

November 13, 1882.

GREY SHRIKE IN DUMBARTONSHIRE.

The county of Dumbarton seems to be a favourite locality for stray specimens of the grey shrike. On Saturday, the 3d of this month (Feb.), a fine male was shot by my son, Captain Alan Colquhoun, in the pine-wood of the Black Hill, above Helensburgh, on the Clyde. Four years ago, another male specimen was killed by an under-keeper in the home coverts, near Rossdhu. The watcher had never heard of such a bird, far less seen it, and was under the impression that he had bagged a jay. A third grey shrike was shot on the opposite shores of Loch Lomond a good many years ago. I have also cause to remember a fourth instance, for the creature's cruel bite left a mark on my boyish finger for many a day, having snared one in a gin made by myself. I had set the gin for small birds on the top of a bed of manure, with a handful of bread-crumbs as decoy, when a blue tit was entangled in the horsehair nooses. A ravenous shrike perched in a yew-tree, on the watch, darted down on the tit, and was caught itself. Before I could reach the murderer, he had guillotined the tit, whose head was lying beside the body. Seizing my prize carelessly,—thinking he was of the thrush order,—he

turned on me with the snap to which I have referred. He was placed in a parrot's cage, but he dashed continually against the wires, and would eat neither meat nor small birds. So, after two days' confinement, he was set free.

JOHN COLQUHOUN.

1 ROYAL TERRACE, EDINBURGH.

[The great grey shrike is an annual winter visitant to the British Islands, and we are surprised to hear that it has not been met with in Dumbartonshire more frequently than as above stated.—ED.]

In answer to your editorial note of last Saturday, let me say I rented shootings in the northern, southern, eastern, and western counties of my native Scotland, always staying at them till the close of the winter season. During that long term of years, spent in such different localities, I never saw but one grey shrike, with the exception of the Dumbartonshire specimens. The other appeared on the banks of the Tay, where I was watching for wild-fowl one very severe winter, when a tenant of Kinnaird, near Dunkeld. I tried hard to shoot it, but failed. My late friend the rector of Stowlangtoft, in Suffolk, a Fellow of Oriel, and a keen accurate observer of natural history, after the school of White of Selborne, wrote to me when I was a young man, that a pair of great ash-coloured shrikes had built in a tree near his garden. He was very proud of such a rare occurrence, and watched the rearing of the nestlings with much interest. I often regretted afterwards not having embraced the opportunity of going to see so great a curiosity.

JOHN COLQUHOUN.

SIR,—It was only this morning that I happened to see in your columns Mr Colquhoun's letter on the great shrike or butcher-bird. He says the county of Dumbarton is a favourite locality for stray specimens. In this county also

they seem to be occasionally met with. Last November, whilst walking in the garden with a friend, we came on a bird strange to both of us, but which I know now was the butcher-bird. On our approach, it took a short flight of eight or ten yards; and although apparently tolerably plump and in good condition, it was evidently tired and disinclined to fly, giving one the idea of a bird "just come over." Telling my friend to keep an eye on him and attract his attention, I ran into the house and got a "landing-net," and creeping up from behind, captured him quite easily. In extracting him from the net, he went at my hand rather acrimoniously, almost drawing blood. Having got him, the question was what to do with him. It was a bitter cold day, and we decided that a warmer climate was the thing for him, so we put him in the conservatory, then at a temperature of 70 degrees. The next step was to get him something to eat. We tried him with bread — he wouldn't look at it. We then got him a bit of raw meat, and this he ate most ravenously. Having provided him with food and lodgings, we left him for the night. Next morning on coming down to breakfast, to my surprise and disappointment I found him laid out with the letters on the hall table as dead as Julius Cæsar. What killed him? Was he ill and not tired only when we caught him, or did he fall a victim to heated rooms and over-feeding, as many a nobler animal has done before him? The garden of which I write is on the coast, within three miles of the sea. The friend with whom I was staying—a thorough sportsman, who has shot everything in this county and elsewhere that can be shot, bar landlords—assured me he had never seen such a bird in his life. His keeper told me *he* had, —"lots of them,"—but that functionary is an adept with the weapon of our forefathers—the long bow—more so, indeed, than with the "central fire" of Grant or Lancaster. —I am, &c., H. S.

ALNMOUTH, NORTHUMBERLAND, *Feb.* 24.

THE HARMLESS KESTREL.

Keeper Logic.—"A kustril's a hawk—an' a' hawks is hawks—an' a' hawks is vermin—an' a' vermin maun be shot."

A TORPID SHEPHERD.

A Highland shepherd, lying on the hillside, was asked by a tourist to show him the road. "Oh, had straight on that way," says Donald, lying still, and pointing with his foot the direction intended. "If you will show me a lazier dodge than that, I will give you half-a-crown." "If you will just drap the half-croon into ma' pooch then."

PEREGRINE AND CURLEW.

In the summer of 1880, one of the Luss watchers perceived a curlew and falcon high in the air. The curlew was much above its pursuer. Notwithstanding this advantage, it all of a sudden collapsed, and doubling up, sank rapidly to the ground. The peregrine dashed in like lightning, and struck its victim dead in the air! Another of the keepers assured us he had witnessed exactly the same beautiful feat of falconry a short time before.

THE LONDON PHYSICIAN AND CELTIC GILLIE.

In the summer of 1880, a celebrated London physician, when performing very badly at the Inverness-shire grouse, turned apologetically to the Celtic gillie. "I see, Peter, shooting is not my vocation in life." "You are right, sir," was the apt reply; "you were made to cure, not to kill."

WILD GOATS IN POOLEWE.

Farmers keep them on the rocky pasturage of Poolewe, to keep down the grass on dangerous ground, and so prevent sheep from being tempted to this risky feeding.

GUILLEMOTS DRIVEN UP THE RIVER FYNE NEAR INVERARY, BY A GALE OF WIND, IN OCTOBER 1882.

A large flock of these sea-birds flew for miles up the Fyne river, driven by a terrific storm of wind. They apparently attempted to swim back when the gale abated, but being starved for want of their proper food, numbers were found dead or dying on the banks almost skeletons.

THE SPARROW TREE.

A slip of a thorn-bush was planted by a little boy in my garden, which has now grown into a tree 24 feet 3 inches high, and 2 feet 4 inches in circumference a foot from the ground. It is the grand emporium of all the sparrows of the adjacent houses, and so has been aptly named "The Sparrow Club." Every morning I see about a score of them perched together amongst the branches, and very seldom is the club quite empty. Although the half-domestic robin-redbreast, with his genteel legs and graceful bows, never deserts the garden bushes, yet he seldom deigns to visit his short-legged, vulgar, "hotching" neighbours of the club. Three of the tits—viz., the great tit, the coal tit, and the blue tit, now and then, like travelling tourists, make a flying call at the club, but their visits are few and far between. A cock and hen blackbird, however, have enrolled themselves honorary members, and often appear at irregular hours. Thrushes are rarely seen on the tree, but they are not so sociable as their sooty cousins.

Most years the thrush tunes up in early spring before the blackbird, but last spring was an exception, and the merle was heard in this neighbourhood a week before the mavis.

In the autumn especially, both sparrows and blackbirds seem to hunt for prey amongst the leaves of this thorn-

tree; and last autumn (1883) I saw the cock blackbird frantically beating the leaves as if he had seen or winded game. Before long, rather a large grey moth stole out in a great fright at the opposite side of the tree, meaning to sneak off slily; but the quick eye of her sable pursuer caught sight of her in a moment, when he dashed round the tree, and before she had flown ten yards, pouched her with the greatest adroitness and gusto.

When the November blast has scattered the club furniture, and it holds up a leafless front to the wintry sky, the members make use of its bare branches chiefly as a look-out for the bread-crumbs daily provided for them; and indeed they seem to depend almost entirely on this artificial support.

In open winters, few, except the sparrows and blackbirds, robins, hedge-sparrows and thrushes, deigned to come to the free breakfast and dinner table; but when a continued hard frost sets in, tits, wrens, hardy chaffinches, and even rooks, seemed very grateful to be allowed a share of the charity.

The season before last, our most interesting visitors appeared for a whole winter. They were three starlings, which fed regularly every morning, noon, and evening. From the quantity of kitchen refuse they devoured, it was evident that they had no other food-supply, and must have subsisted all that winter on farinaceous diet. Starlings are indeed about the lowest order of the *Corvidæ*, the waxwing being only an occasional migrant.

Although the stare generally walks and the blackbird hops, I have seen both exchange their usual gait for that of the other—viz., the black ousel run a dozen steps at a time, and the starling take two or three as decided hops as a blackbird or mavis.

If soft spring weather comes, both blackbirds and thrushes have a rare feast on the earth-worms which bore to the surface of the green turf, and show wonderful keenness of sight. They also display quick hearing in detect-

ing the reptiles, and the greatest adroitness in dragging them from their casts, scarcely ever breaking a worm in the struggle.

When nesting-time arrives, the club is in a great measure deserted, the blackbirds building in the ivy at the top of the garden wall, and the blue tits in a hole of the same wall, on the old prescriptive title of use and wont. Only one pair of sparrows built their huge, ugly, domed nest on the stump of a branch sawn off a lime-tree, on a level and within five yards of my dressing-room window. All the rest of the colony deserted to the front gardens.

This solitary nest being so close, I noticed easily the whole manœuvres of the architects. They built and then pulled down the whole fabric nine times. This was heavy work for the poor cock, as his mate seemed to expect him to be simply the caddy, and to bring the chief of the building stuff, while she only deigned to carry a billful now and then, contenting herself with shaping the nest. The cock had merely a turn at this pleasant work when she was gone for a short time. I have been much amused at his rueful bearing, when the house being quite finished, his wife, with true feminine caprice, began at the lower end to tear it to shreds. Scarcely was the work of destruction ended, when with Job-like spirit the cock began his labour again. At the tenth effort the wilful wife condescended to lay her eggs and hatch them.

During the time of incubation, the cock constantly visited the nest with food for his mate, and (I think) took some share in hatching the eggs. At last, several little yellow gaping bills showed themselves whenever cock or hen parent flew up with meat of various kinds gathered chiefly in the garden below. The cock brought at least three times as much for nursery supply as the hen—indeed her highness seemed to take it for granted that the chief toil, both in building the nest and feeding the young, devolved on her meek and submissive husband. If a stray sparrow, cock or hen, lit even on the tree where the nest

was, he dashed instantly at it, and drove it away with the greatest ferocity; so it was not want of spirit which made him treat his exacting partner so kindly.

On a calm sunny morning, one of the nestlings hopped out upon a twig above and crossing the nest entrance. There was a sheer descent of at least thirty feet, yet the little creature shewed not the least nervousness, but looked round with the same pertness as its father, the old cock, might have shown. I watched it until, hopping glibly round, it plumped back again into the nursery. For several days one or more of them came out and sat on this perch; but at last, when their wings were strong, they all suddenly disappeared. A fortnight later (having taught the young to "fend" for themselves) the old birds returned and began repairing the nest, evidently anxious to rear another family. At this crisis I left home for two months, but was told, on my return, that the second brood had just flown.

When I rented Sonachan shootings, a pair of forktail chimney swallows came every spring and made a snug nest under the eaves of the house above the spout, close to my window, and always reared two broods. Like the sparrows, the first hatching began in May, and the second were ready to accompany the flock in the autumn migration.

Both swallows and sparrows carefully cleaned the nursery from the refuse of the young ones; but the young swallows, not being perchers, never quitted the nest till they left it in a body.

LIST OF MY SHOOTING PLACES.

Arrochar House—shootings and fishings—Dumbartonshire.
Kinnaird House and shootings, with permission of salmon-fishing in the Tay—Perthshire.
Ardenconnel, with permission to shoot over the Luss estates—Dumbartonshire.
Langlee, with grouse and lowland shootings, and leave to fish in the Tweed, and shooting of Philiphaugh and Stow Moor—Roxburghshire.
Leny House and shootings, with the exclusive leave of wild-fowl shooting on Loch Vennachar; also salmon-fishing on the Teith—Perthshire.
Kilmun Hills, with the salmon, grilse, and trout fishing of the River Echaig—Argyleshire.
The Hopes, with grouse and partridge shooting of Milknowe—East Lothian.
Newpark, with the grousing of the Colzium Hills, and trout-fishing on the Almond—West Lothian.
Sonachan House and shootings, on Loch Awe—Argyleshire.
Blackhall and shootings, with five miles' salmon-fishing on the Dee—Aberdeenshire.
Buttergaske—grouse and partridge shootings—Perthshire.
Scalastal shootings, in Mull—Argyleshire.
Garth House—shootings and salmon-fishing, with leave over the River Lyon—Perthshire.
Glenforsa House and shootings, with salmon-fishing on the River Knock and Loch Baa; added to Scalastal shootings aforesaid—Argyleshire.
Glenfalloch House and shootings, with the exclusive right of the River Falloch—Perthshire.
Kames Castle in Isle of Bute, with the whole wild shootings of North Bute.

Ballimore on Loch Fyne, house and shootings, and salmon-fishing on the River Ruel—Argyleshire.
Kirkhill Castle and shootings, and salmon-fishing on the Stinchar (Lugar)—Ayrshire.
Knockbrex—Kirkcudbrightshire.
Arrochar House and shootings—my first place and the last.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

PRINTED BY WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS.